TIPPOO SULTAUN.

VOL. III.

TIPPOO SULTAUN;

A TALE OF

THE MYSORE WAR.

BY

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

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TIPPOO SULTAUN.

CHAPTER I.

While the principal division of the army was displaying its choicest manœuvres in front of the gate of the wall, now and then venturing within shot, and giving and receiving a distant volley, the noise of the firing came faintly to those engaged, and, as it was expected, caused no sensation, except of anxiety for the moment when their victorious Sultaun should arrive, driving before him the infidel defenders; and when the gates should be opened, and the mass of cavalry should rush in to complete their rout and destruction. Many a man there

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anticipated the pleasure of slaughtering the flying foe, of hunting them like wild beasts, of the fierce gratifications of lust and unchecked plunder; but hours passed and no victorious army appeared; the defenders of the fort called to them to come on, with insulting jestures and obscene abuse, and shook their swords and matchlocks at them in defiance. This was hardly to be borne, and yet they who mocked them were beyond their reach; at length, as they looked, several horsemen approached them with desperate speed, their horses panting with fatigue and heat. The Khan and many others rode to meet them.

"Ya Alla kureem," cried all, "what news? where are the army and the Sultaun? why do ye look so wildly?"

"Alas!" answered one who was well known to the Khan as a leader of note, "the army is defeated, and we much fear the Sultaun is lost; he was in the van leading on the attack with Syud Sahib, Hussein Ali, Bakir Sahib, and the young Patél, who was fighting we heard like a tiger, when Alla only knows how the army took a panic and fled."

"And you were within the walls?" cried many voices.

"We were, and had marched some miles. Alas! it would have been better had we never entered."

"And how did you escape?"

"The ditch was already filled with our companions," said the horseman, "and we scrambled over their bodies; I found a horse near, and have ridden for my life to tell the news."

They asked no more questions, and each looked at his fellow with silent shame and vexation that this should have been the end of all their hopes. One by one the leaders drew off, and in a short time division after division left the ground, and returned towards the camp; a few only daring to meet the discomfited host, which soon began to pour by hundreds into it, exhausted, humbled, full of shame and mortification.

Among the first was the Sultaun; for the elephants had, at a little distance, kept a parallel line with the wall, one was easily procured for him, and having been lifted upon it he was rapidly borne to the camp; but he was un-

attended, and arrived at his tents almost unknown and unobserved.

But the loud nagara soon sounded, and men knew that he was safe; and though it was the signal that the Durbar was open, and that he expected their presence, few went to him, or cared to meet him in the temper which they knew must possess him. The Khan was among the first who entered; his low salaam was almost disregarded, and he took his seat, pitying the Sultaun's shame and mortification, which was fully expressed on his sullen countenance.

One by one, however, the leaders of the divisions which had remained behind entered, and took their places in silence; none dared to speak; and the restless eyes of the monarch, the whites of which were yellow and bloodshot, wandered from one to another round the assembly, as if searching for some pretext to break forth into the rage which evidently possessed him, and which was augmented by the pain of the sprain of his ankle. There was a dead silence, so unusual in his Durbar; and the words which were spoken by the attendants to one another were uttered in a whis-

per. Now and then the Sultaun rubbed his ankle impatiently, and knit his brows when a severe paroxysm of pain passed through it: or else he sat silent, looking round and round; —the bravest of those present used to say afterwards that they waited to see who would be first sacrificed to his vengeance. The silence was insupportable; at last Nedeem Khan, his favourite and chief flatterer, ventured to speak.

"May Alla and the Prophet ease the pain thou art suffering, O Sultaun!" he said; "can your slave do ought to relieve it?"

"Oh, rare bravery to speak!" cried the Sultaun with bitterness; "thou wert not with me, Nedeem Khan, to partake of the abomination we have eaten this day at the hands of our own friends and those infidel Hindoos—may their ends be damnation! No, thou didst volunteer to be with the division without the gate, that thy fine clothes and fine horse might be seen by the defenders of the wall. Verily thy destiny is great, that thou wert not among that crowd, nor struggling with that heap of —— Pah! where is Kasim Ali Patél?" he

continued after a pause; "why is he not present? and Lall Khan also?"

"Kasim Ali Jemadar Huzrut!" cried Lall Khan advancing, "has not been seen since—"

"Not been seen!" thundered the Sultaun, attempting to rise and sinking back in pain, —"not been seen! and thou to tell me this! Oh kumbukht! By Alla, Lall Khan, hadst thou not too aided me, thou shouldest have been scourged till the skin was cut from thy back. Begone! thou and thy companions—seek him dead or alive, and bring him hither to me."

"Asylum of the world! he lies, if he be killed, among the dead upon the edge of the ditch, and the enemy is in possession of the walls, and—"

"Begone!" roared the Sultaun; "if he was in hell thou shouldest bring him. Begone! thou art a coward, Lall Khan."

"Huzrut!" said the old Khan, rising and joining his hands, hardly able to speak, for his grief was choking him; "if your slave has his dismissal, he will accompany Lall Khan in search of——" He could not finish the

speech, and the big tears rolled down his rough visage upon his beard.

"Go, Rhyman Khan," said the Sultaun, evidently touched by his emotion; "may you be successful." And again he relapsed into silence, as the two officers departed on their almost hopeless errand.

"The tiger will have blood ere he is pacified," whispered Bakir Sahib, who had arrived, and now sat near Nedeem. "I pray, Alla, it may be none of this assembly!"

"Will they find Kasim Ali?" asked the other.

"Willa Alum," responded his friend, "I think not; but he will be no loss to us."

"None—but what is this?"

As he spoke, there was a noise without, and suddenly a man, evidently a Hindoo, rushed bare-headed into the assembly, crying out, "Daad! Daad! Daad*!" and advancing threw himself on the ground, and lay at full length motionless before the Sultaun.

"What ho, Furashes! Chobdars!" roared the Sultaun, his face quivering with rage; "what is this hog—this defiled father of abomination?

* Complaint.

were ye asleep to allow our Durbar to be polluted by his presence? who and what art thou?" he cried to the trembling wretch, who had been roughly raised by the Furashes; "speak! art thou drunk?"

"You are my father and mother—you are my Sultaun—you are my god!" cried the man; "I am a poor Brahmin; I am not drunk—I have been plundered—I have been beaten by a devil they call Jaffar Sahib; he seeks my life, and I have fled to your throne for mercy."

"Thou shalt have it," said the Sultaun quietly, with his low chuckling laugh, which not even his officers could listen to without feeling their blood curdle; "thou shalt have it. Away with him, Furashes!" he cried, raising his shrill voice, "away with him! I see an elephant yonder; chain him to its foot, and let him be dragged to and fro before the place he has defiled."

The wretched man listened wildly to his sentence—he could not understand it; he looked on the Sultaun with a trembling smile, and then with a feigned laugh round the assem-

bly; nought met his eye but stern and inexorable faces; there were many who felt the horrible injustice of the act, but none pitied the fate of the Brahmin after the event of the morning."

"Do ye not hear?" cried the Sultaun again; and, ere he could say a word, the Brahmin was borne shrieking out of the tent. All listened fearfully, and soon they heard the shrill scream of the elephant, as, after the wretched man had been bound to his foot, the noble and tender-hearted animal—it was old Hyder—was unwillingly goaded into a desperate run, and, dashing forward, soon put an end to his sufferings. They looked, and saw something apparently without form jerked along at the end of a chain by the foot of the elephant at every step he took in the rapid pace into which he had been urged.

"The Durbar is closed," said the Sultaun after a time, during which he had not spoken, but continued moodily to watch the door of the tent for the elephant, as it passed to and fro. "Ye have your dismissal, sirs, we would be alone."

They were glad to escape from his presence.

"I said how it would be, Khan," said Bakir Sahib, as they passed out; "Alla knows what would have happened if that Brahmin had not rushed in."

"Alla knows!" said the other; "I trembled for myself, for he was savage to me. After all it was the Brahmin's fate—it was written—who could have averted it?"

The glaring day waned fast. Kasim had been wounded about mid-day, and still lay near the same spot, enduring almost insufferable agony. At first he had been insensible, but when he recovered and was enabled to look around him, the place was deserted, except by a few of the enemy at a distance, who were busily employed in stripping the dead and wounded of their arms and clothes. He found his sword, his shield and daggers were gone,—his turban and waistband, and upper garment also: his head and his body were bare, for they had thought him dead, and the fierce rays of the burning sun descended in unmitigated fury upon him, increasing to an agonizing degree the torment of thirst.

"Water! Water!" he cried to those whom

he saw afar off; "Water, for the sake of your mothers and your children!—will ye suffer me to die?"

Alas! they heard him not; they were too busy in their work of plunder; and, if they had, it would have been only to return, and with a thrust of a spear or a sword to have ended his sufferings. To him death would have been welcome, for his agony was past enduring, and he had no hope of alleviation till he died. But his voice was too weak for them to hear; and if he exerted it, there came a rush of blood into his mouth which almost choked him.

He tried to move, to drag himself under the shade of a bush which was at a short distance; it was impossible,—the pain he suffered became excruciating; and, after making several desperate but ineffectual attempts, he fainted. This temporary oblivion, at least, brought absence from pain, and was welcome,—but it did not last; and as the returning life-blood poured through his heart his agony of body was renewed, and thoughts too rapid and too vague to assume decisive forms

—a weak delirium, in which his mother, Ameena, his friend, the Sultaun, the dreadful passage of the ditch, and the heaps of struggling forms—were incoherently mingled in wild confusion. Now his distempered fancy caused him to imagine that he again bore on the Sultaun,—now his form would seem to change into Ameena's, and he would shout his despair, and cry the war-cry of the faith as he strove for life and mastery among the thousands who fiercely struggled with him; but his fancied shouts were only low moans, which from time to time escaped him, as he lay to all appearance dead.

And again the thirst, the heat, and the pain slowly but surely brought on frenzy—fierce ravings of battle and hot contest; and words of encouragement to those around him: defiance of the enemy, with wild invocations of Alla and the Prophet, broke from his lips in faint murmurs, though passionately uttered; he thought them shouts, but they could scarcely have been heard by one standing over him. At times the sweat poured from him in streams, or stood in big drops on his brow; again his

frame would seem to dry up, till he thought it would crack and burst.

In a lucid moment he found he had dragged himself, during a paroxysm of delirium, under the shade of the bush; it was grateful to him, and soothed his burning head and skin; and with the coolness came visions of quiet shady groves—of fountains, whose ceaseless plashings, mingling with the gentle rustling of leafy boughs, were music in his ears—of bubbling springs, whose waters flowed up to his lips and were dashed thence by malignant forms which his excited brain created. By turns despair and hope possessed him, but in his quiet moments he prayed to Alla for death, for release from suffering, and from the deadly sickness caused by a burning throat and loss of blood. He could feel that he had been shot through the body, and he wondered how it was possible to retain life in such a state.

As often as he looked for a moment over the open space, he saw in hundreds the horrible birds of prey, ravens and kites, and the filthy and powerful vultures, tearing the hardly cold bodies, and disputing with each other over

their sickening banquet, while others wheeled and screamed above them ready to take the place of any who should be driven by the rest from their meal. Wherever he looked, it was the same; there were hundreds of the obscene birds, struggling, scrambling, fighting with each other, while thousands of crows in clamorous and incessant flight, hovered over, alighting where chance threw in their way a coveted morsel; and now and then some prying raven would approach him with long hops, croaking to his fellows, his keen black eye glistening brightly in anticipation, and would hardly be scared away by the faint gestures and cries of the sufferer.

The night fell gently—that night, which many a one would spend in luxury, in the enjoyment of voluptuous pleasures, surrounded by objects which enthral the senses, lying upon the softest carpets, while burning incense filled the air with rich perfume, and the soft sighs of women and the gentle tinkling of their anklets sounded in their ears—that night he would pass in terror, surrounded by the ghastly forms of the dead.

The sun sank in glory, the hues of the brilliant west faded dimly on his aching sight, and from the east over the wooded hills the yellow moon arose, dim at first, and seemingly striving to maintain the waning daylight. Soon, however, that faded away, and the melancholy and quivering wail of the brass horn, and the deep sound of the evening kettledrums from the wall, showed that the enemy were setting their night-watch. The gorged birds of prey flapped their broad wings heavily in their short flights to the nearest trees, to roost there till the morrow should break, enabling them to recommence their glutting and bloody feast.

They were succeeded by beasts of prey: one by one jackals issued from the jungle, and looking carefully around, first one and then another raised his nose into the air, and as he sniffed the banquet, sent forth a howl or shriek which ran through the unfortunate Kasim's veins like ice. Now he could see many, many, running to and fro in the moon's bright light, and their cries and screams increased fearfully. To his excited and delirious

spirit—for his senses fled and returned at intervals—the place he thought was the hell he had read of, and the howls like those of the damned. Now stalked abroad the stealthy wolf, and the gaunt and fierce hyæna mingled his horrible howl with those of the innumerable jackals which hurried on in packs to the ditch; and Kasim could hear the distant bayings of others as they answered the invitation from afar. How he prayed for death! Had he possessed a weapon, he would have rid himself of life; but he had to endure all, and he shrank into the bush as far he could, to screen himself from the notice of the wild animals, lest he should be torn in pieces by them ere he was dead. Some even came and sniffed at him, and their bright and wild eyes glared upon him; but seeing that he yet lived, they passed on to where in the ditch carcases lay in heaps inviting them to feast.

On a sudden, while he lay in utter despair, he thought he heard the clashing sound of an elephant's bells, and the peculiar and monotonous cry of palankeen-bearers. Could it be? or was it only a mockery of his senses, such as

had raised water to his lips and spread before him delicious and juicy fruits? He listened in fearful suspense; he did not hear it for a time, and hope, which had arisen strong within him, was dying away, when it came again on the soft night breeze that had just arisen, and he could hear it clearly above the yells and howls of the beasts around him, who were fighting savagely over the dead.

Alla! how he panted, as the welcome sound came nearer and nearer; and how his spirit sank within him as he thought it might only be travellers by some by-road he knew not of. Now his faculties were all sharply alive; had he possessed the power of motion, how gladly would he have hurried to meet them; he tried to move, to raise himself, and fell back helpless. "Alas!" he said aloud, "it is but a delusion; they will pass me, and the light of morning will never shine on Kasim Ali alive." His own voice seemed awful in the solitude, but he could speak now, although very faintly, and if they passed near him he was determined to exert his utmost energy in one cry, should it even be his last effort.

A horse's neigh now rang shrill and clear in the distance, and the clash of the elephant's bells became more and more distinct. They were coming!—they were surely coming—perhaps for him—perhaps it was the Khan—perhaps the Sultaun had thought of him—how tumultuous were his thoughts!

Now he even thought he could hear voices, and presently there was another loud snorting neigh, for the horses had smelt the dead afar off. He crawled out from his hiding-place, and looked with intense expectation; there was a twinkling light far away among the jungle. It blazed up.

"Ya Alla kureem! it is a torch—they come, they come!" cried the poor fellow. He heard a confused sound of voices, for the yells of the beasts had ceased: he could see many slinking off into the thickets, and there was perfect silence. Now the red light illumined the trees at a little distance—they were descending one side of a hollow towards him—he could track their progress by the light upon the trees—he lost it for a time, as they ascended the other side—again it gleamed brightly, and on a sudden burst like

a meteor upon his glance, as the body of men, with several torches, the elephant, the palankeen, and some horsemen appeared for a moment on an open spot pressing towards him.

He could not be mistaken; but Kasim now dreaded lest the garrison should make a sally over the ditch; he looked there—all was dark, but in the distance a few lights on the wall were hurrying to and fro, as though the alarm was given, and a shrill blast of the collery horn was borne to his ear. "They will not come!" he thought, and thought truly; they would not have dared to face the ghastly spectacle in the ditch.

The voices were real, and the lights were but a short distance from him; the party had stopped to consult, and the poor fellow's heart beat wildly with suspense lest they should advance no further; he could not hear what they said, but on a sudden a cry arose from several, "Kasim Ali! Kasim Ali! ho!" which resounded far and wide among the still jungle.

He strove to repeat it, but the blood gushed into his throat: he fell back in despair. They came nearer and nearer, shouting his name.

"It was near this spot," said one; "I am sure of it, for here is a corpse, and here another: let us look further." And they continued to track the way of the fugitives by the dead.

"Kasim Ali! Kasim Ali! ho, hote!" shouted a voice which thrilled to Kasim's very soul, for it was the Khan's: how well he knew it—an angel's would have been less welcome. One torch-bearer was advancing, hardly fifty paces from him; he waited an instant, then summoning his resolution, "Ho! hote!" he cried, with all his remaining power. The sound was very faint, but it was heard.

"Some one answered!" shouted the torch-bearer.

"Where? for the sake of Alla," cried the Khan from his horse.

"Yonder, in front."

"Quick, run!" was the reply, and all hurried on, looking to the right and left.

Kasim could not speak, but he waved his arm; as they came close to him, the broad glare of the torch fell on him, and he was seen.

All rushed towards him, and the old Khan, throwing himself recklessly from his horse,

ran eagerly to his side and gazed in his face. Kasim's eye was dim, and his face and body were covered with blood; but the features were well known to him, and the old soldier, unable to repress his emotion, fell on his knees beside him, and raising his clasped hands wept aloud.

"Shookur-khoda! Ul-humd-ul-illa!" he cried at last when he could speak, "he lives! my friends, he lives! I vow a gift to thee, O Moula Ali, and to thee, O Burhanee Sahib, for this joy: I vow Fatehas at your shrines, and to feed a hundred Fakeers in your names."

"Do not speak, Kasim Ali, my son, my heart's life. Inshalla! you will live. Inshalla! we will tend thee as a child. Do not stir hand or foot:" (Kasim had clasped the Khan's hand, and was endeavouring to raise it to his lips:) "no thanks, no thanks—not a word! art thou not dear to us? Ay, by Alla and his apostle? Gently now, my friends, gently; so, raise him up—now the palankeen here, 'tis the Khanum's own, Kasim—never heed his blood," he added, as some of the bearers strove to put their waistbands under him. "Aistee, aistee*!

* Easy, easy!

—kubardar * !—well done ! Art thou easy, Kasim ? are the pillows right ?—what, too low? thou canst not breathe !—now, are they better ? —nay, speak not, I understand thy smile ;" and truly it was one of exquisite pleasure which overspread his face.

"What, water ?" he continued, as Kasim motioned to his open mouth, "Ya, Alla ! he can have had none here all day. Quick, bring the soraee and cup ! There," he said, filling a cup with the sparkling and cool fluid, "Bismilla, drink !"

The fevered Kasim clutched it as though it had contained the water of Paradise ; cup after cup was given him, and he was refreshed. The flower of life, which had well nigh withered, was revived once more, and hope again sprang up in his breast.

"Go on with easy steps," cried the Khan to the bearers, "I will give you a sheep tomorrow if ye carry him well and quickly."

"On our head and eyes be it," said the chief of the bearers, and they set forward.

The men on the wall fired a few random

* Take care

shots at the party, but they were too distant to aim with effect, and it proceeded rapidly. The journey of some miles was a severe trial to the exhausted Kasim, and they were several times obliged to rest; but they reached the summit of the last declivity after some hours, and the welcome sight of the huge camp below, the white tents gleaming brightly in the moonlight, among which hundreds of watch-fires were sparkling, greeted the longing eyes of Kasim. In a few minutes more they had arrived at the Khan's own tent, and he was lifted from the palankeen into the interior, and laid on a soft bedding which had been prepared within. The place was cleared of those who had crowded round, and although Kasim's eyes were dizzy, and the tent reeled before him, he was conscious that the gentle voices which were around him, the shrouded forms which knelt by him, and the soft hands which washed the hard and clotted blood from him, were those of Ameena's women.

CHAPTER II.

The excitement of the day had prevented the Sultaun from feeling the pain of the severe sprain until late, when it became insupportable: in vain it was fomented and rubbed; that seemed only to increase the swelling and stiffness; but when he heard that Kasim had arrived in the camp badly wounded, he could not withstand the desire of seeing him to whom he owed the preservation of his life; accordingly he was lifted into a chair, and, entirely unattended, directed his bearers to carry him to the Khan's tent, where he sent orders for his chief physician to meet him.

Such an honour was entirely unlooked for by

the Khan and his household, nevertheless he was received with respect, carried into the tent where Kasim was, and set down by the side of the sufferer, who lay almost in a state of insensibility, showing consciousness only at intervals. The women servants who had been fomenting the wound, and had arisen at his entrance, now resumed their occupation; for though Daood and his other men had offered their services, the Khan had thought truly that there was more lightness and softness in the hand of woman; and Ameena's nurse, Meeran, had set the example to the rest, aided by the instructions of her brother Zoolficar, who was busy preparing a poultice of herbs for the wound.

The Sultaun regarded Kasim intently before he spoke to the Khan, and several times stooping down felt his pulse and head.

"Inshalla! he will yet live," he said; "we, the chosen of the Prophet, are counted to have much skill in the treatment of wounds, and therefore we say, Inshalla! he will live; his pulse is strong and firm, and he is not going to die."

"Alla forbid," echoed all around.

"Whose advice hast thou got for him, Khan?" asked the Sultaun.

"None as yet, Asylum of the World! my Khanum's women here have been fomenting the wound, and a slave of mine who has skill in such matters, for he was a barber once, is preparing a poultice."

"We desire to know what is in it," said the Sultaun; "there is much in having lucky herbs boiled under the influence of salutary planets; send for him." The replies of Zoolficar were deemed satisfactory by the Sultaun, who desired him to proceed with the work. The Hukeem too shortly afterwards attended, and began carefully to examine the patient; he had evidently but little hope, and shook his head with a melancholy air when he had made his survey.

"There is no hope of his life," said the old man. "I have seen many shot, but a man never survived such a wound—his liver is pierced, and he must die."

"I tell thee no! Moorad-ali," said the Sultaun; "we have had dreams about him of late, his destiny we know is linked with our own,

and we are alive—Inshalla! we shall yet see him on horseback."

"Inshalla-ta-Alla," said the Hukeem, "in him alone is the power, and we will do what we can to aid any merciful interference he may make." But his directions for an application were little different from the mixture of the cook, which was shortly afterwards applied. The Sultaun waited awhile in the hope of hearing Kasim speak, but he continued to lie breathing heavily and slightly groaning, when additional pain caused a pang.

"We can do no good," he said, to the Khan; "let us leave him to the care of Alla, who will restore him to us if it be his destiny. Come then with me to the morning Durbar; we will summon the leaders, and settle some plan for the future, which we were too disturbed to arrange yesterday."

The Khan followed him, charging the women strictly with the care of the poor sufferer until he returned; he was soon afterwards engaged in deliberation with the Sultaun and his officers. One of two alternatives presented themselves to Tippoo; either to abandon the undertaking

suddenly, and while the English should think him engaged there to fall upon their territory with fire and sword,—or to send for heavy guns from Seringapatam, and breach the barrier, when an assault, such as could not be withstood by the besieged, might be made with success. The latter was in the end adopted; the army serving in Malabar was desired to join the Sultaun by long forced marches; heavy batteries of guns were ordered directly from the city; and his officers, from his manner and the eagerness with which he entered into the matter, saw how intent he was on providing for the emergency.

The pain Tippoo had suffered the whole night was intense; but the excitement of the Durbar, the dictation of the letters to his officers, and the deliberation, had prevented him from betraying it more than by an impatient gesture or ill-suppressed oath. At last he could bear it no longer, and sank back upon his musnud, cursing terribly the infidels who had caused his defeat and suffering; but he rallied again immediately, and started up to a sitting posture, while he exposed and pointed to his ankle, which he had hitherto kept concealed under a shawl.

"Ye see what pain and grief are devouring us," he cried, "and we call upon ye to revenge it."

"We are ready—on our head and eyes be it!" cried all.

"For every throb of pain," continued the Sultaun, speaking in suppressed rage from between his closed teeth, while he held his ankle, "we will have a kafir's life; we will hunt them like beasts, we will utterly despoil their country. Ya, Alla Mousoof! we swear before thee and this company, that we will resent this affront upon thy people to the death—that we will not leave this camp, pressing as are our necessities elsewhere, till we have sent thousands of these kafirs to perdition; and ye are witness, my friends, of this."

"And I swear to aid thee, O Sultaun!" cried the Khan with enthusiasm, "and to revenge that poor boy if he dies." "And I! and I!" cried all, as they started to their feet in the wild spirit of the moment; "the kafirs shall be utterly destroyed."

"I am satisfied now," cried the Sultaun; "what has happened was the will of Alla, and was pre-ordained; whatever a man's fate is, tha

he must suffer;" and the assembly assented by a general "Ameen!" "However, Inshalla!" he continued, "we have seen the last reverse; and we are assured by comforting thoughts that the army of the faith will be henceforth victorious. Ye have your dismissal now, for we are in much pain and would consult our physician."

"During the absence of the Khan the attentions of the women to poor Kasim had been incessant, and everything was done that kindness could suggest to procure any alleviation of his pain. His wound was fomented, his limbs kneaded, his still parched and fevered lips moistened with cool sherbet. Meeran had striven to comfort her young mistress for some time, but in vain: she had not been able to repress her emotions when he was brought in wounded, although she dared not in presence of her lord give full vent to her feelings; but when she knew that he had left the tent with the Sultaun, she could no longer restrain herself, and gave way to a burst of grief, which would have proved to Meeran, had she not before known of her love for him, how deep and true it was.

"I must see him, Meeran," she said at length; "the Khan is gone now, and canst thou not devise some means? Quick! think and act promptly."

"I will send away the women, my rose,—thou shalt see him," said the attendant; "when I cough slightly do thou come in; they say he cannot speak, and lies with his eyes shut."

"Ya, Alla kureem!" cried Ameena; "what if he should die ere I see him, Oh grant him life,—thou wilt not take one so young and so brave. Quick, good nurse! I am sick at heart with impatience."

Meeran found but little difficulty in sending away the women upon some trifling errands for Kasim slept, or appeared to dose; so taking their place by his side, she coughed slightly, and Ameena, who had been waiting anxiously behind the screen which divided the tents, withdrew it hastily and entered.

She advanced with a throbbing heart; she could hardly support herself, as well from her despair of his life as of her own feelings of love for him, which would now brook no control; her mind was a chaos of thoughts,

in which that of his death and her own misery were the most prominent and most wretched.

Nor was the sight before her, as she drew near Kasim, at all calculated to allay her fears; he lay to all appearance dead; his eyes were closed, and his breathing was so slight, that it scarcely disturbed the sheet which was thrown over him; the ruddy brown of his features had changed to a death-like hue, and his eyes were sunken.

Ameena was more shocked than she had anticipated, and it was with difficulty that she could prevent herself from falling to the ground when she first saw his features, so deadly was the sickness which seemed to strike at her heart; but she rallied after an instant of irresolution, and advancing sat down by her nurse, who gently fanned the sleeper.

"He sleeps," she whispered; "Zoolficar has bound up the wound, his remedies are always sure, and there is luck with his hand. Alla kureem! I have hope."

"Alas! I have none, Unna," said Ameena; "I cannot look on those altered features and

hope. Holy Alla! see how he looks now—what will happen?" and she gasped in dread, and put her hand before her eyes.

"It was nothing—nothing, my life, but a slight spasm, some pain he felt in his sleep, or perchance a dream; but it is past; look again, he is smiling!"

His features were indeed pleasant to behold. Even in a few minutes a change had come over them; he had been dreaming, and the excitement and pain of one had been followed, as is often the case, by another of an opposite nature—one of those delirious visions of gardens and fountains which had mocked him as he lay on the battle-field again rose before him, and he fancied that Ameena was beside him, and they roamed together. They saw his lips moving, as though he were speaking, yet no sound came, except an indistinct muttering; but Ameena, whose whole soul was wrapt in watching him, fancied that the motion of his lips expressed her name, and mingled emotions of joy and shame struggled within her for mastery.

Again the peaceful vision had passed away,

and his brow contracted; his nervous arms were raised above the covering over him, and his hands were firmly clenched; he ground his teeth till the blood curdled in their veins, and his lips moved rapidly. "Oh that I could wake him, Unna!" said Ameena; "that I could soothe him with words—that I dare to speak to him. Hush! what does he say?"

"Water! water!" whispered Kasim hoarsely. The rest they could not hear, but it was enough for Ameena; a jar of cool sherbet stood close to her; with a trembling hand she poured out some into the silver cup and held it to his lips. She only thought of his pain, and that she might alleviate it, and Meeran did not prevent the action. The cool metal was grateful to Kasim's dry and heated lips; they were partly open, and as she allowed a little of the delicious beverage to find its way into them, the frown from his brow passed away, the rigid muscles of his face relaxed, and as she softly strove to repeat the action, his eyes opened gently and gazed upon her.

For an instant, to his distempered fancy, her

beauty appeared like that of a houri, and he imagined that he then tasted the cup of heavenly sherbet with which the faithful are welcomed to Paradise; but as he looked longer, the features became familiar to him, and the eyes—those soft and liquid eyes—rested on him with an expression of sympathy and concern which they could not conceal. For an instant he strove to speak—"Ameena!" The name trembled on his lips, but he could not utter it; he suddenly raised himself up a little, and coughed; it was followed by a rush of blood, which seemed almost to choke him.

Ameena could see no more; her sight failed her, and she sank down beside him unconsciously. Meeran however had seen all; she raised her up, and partly carrying, partly supporting her, led her away, while she called to her brother, who stood at the tent-door to watch, to come to Kasim's assistance.

"Thou must keep a stouter heart within thee, my pearl!" she said to Ameena, after having with much assiduity recovered her. Holy Alla! suppose the Khan had come in then, when thou wert lying fainting beside

him—what would he not have thought? I shall never be able to let thee see him again if thou canst not be more firm."

"Alas!" sighed Ameena, "I shall see him but little again; his breath is in his nostrils, and there is no hope: this night—tomorrow—a few hours—and he will cease to live, and then I shall have no friend."

"Put thy trust in Alla!" said the nurse, looking up devoutly; "if thy destiny is linked with his, as I firmly believe it is, there will be life and many happy days for you both." But her words failed to cheer the lady, who wept unceasingly, and would not be comforted.

Days passed, however, and Kasim Ali lived; his spirit of life within him would one while appear to be on the verge of extinction, and again it would revive, and enable him to exchange a few words with those by whom he was tended. It was in vain that he entreated the Khan to allow him to be removed to his own tent; his request was unheeded or refused, and he remained. Gradually he regained some strength; and with this, a power of conversing, which he was only allowed to exert at intervals by the

physicians, and by the kind old cook, who, with the Khan's servant Daood and Ameena's nurse, were his chief attendants. As he lay, weak and emaciated, he would love to speak with Meeran of her who he knew had visited him on the first night of his wound, and to hear of her anxious inquiries after his progress towards recovery.

To Ameena the days passed slowly and painfully; sometimes, when the Khan spoke of Kasim, it was with hope,—at others, as if no power on earth could save him; but she believed her nurse more than him, for her hope never failed, and she was assured by Zoolficar that the crisis had passed favourably, that all tendency to fever had left him, and, though his recovery would be slow, yet that it was sure; and on this hope she lived. Day and night her thoughts were filled with the one subject, and she conversed upon it freely with the Khan, who loved to speak of Kasim, without exciting any surprise in his mind.

And often would she steal softly on tiptoe to the place where Kasim lay asleep, at such times as she knew he was attended only by

Meeran; and looking upon his wasted features, to satisfy herself that he was advancing towards recovery, she would put up a fervent prayer that it might be speedy. But Kasim knew not of these visits, for Ameena had strictly charged her nurse not to mention them, lest they should excite him or he should look for their continuance. Often would the old nurse rally her upon her caution, and urge that it would gratify Kasim, and aid his recovery, to speak with her, but Ameena was resolute.

"I should fail in my purpose," she would say. "Meeran, I dare not risk it; to look on him daily, even for an instant, is happiness to me which thou knowest not of, and such as I may indulge in without shame; but to speak to him, knowing his feelings and mine, would be to approach the brink of a giddy precipice, from whence we might fall to perdition. Am I not the Khan's wife? he is old—I cannot love him, Meeran, but I honour him, and while he lives I will be true to him."

"Alla send thee power, my child!" Meeran would reply; "thou art but a child, it is true,

but thou hast the faith and honour of an older woman, and Alla will reward thee."

But it was a sore temptation to Ameena, and as she gradually became habituated to her silent and stealthy visits, the thought rose up in her heart that it would be pleasant to sit by him for awhile, to watch his gentle and refreshing slumbers,—even to tend him as Meeran and the others did,—above all, to listen to his converse; but she put these thoughts from her by a violent effort, and when once conquered they returned with less force.

Nor did Kasim occupy a less dangerous position, but his principle of honour was high, and, experiencing the constant kindness of the Khan, shown daily in a thousand acts, could he plot against his honour? His passion had imperceptibly given place during his long and great weakness to a purer feeling, which his best reflections and gratitude to his benefactor daily strengthened.

Weeks, nay months, passed. Kasim's recovery was slow and painful; it was long ere he could even sit up, and speak without pain and spitting of blood. But, as his strength

enabled him to do so, he was allowed to sit for a while—then to crawl about—a shadow of his former self! He was pitied by all, and there was hardly a man in that camp who did not feel an interest in the life and recovery of the Patél. Often, too, would the Sultaun visit him, and overpower him with thanks for his preservation; and he showed proofs of his gratitude, in advancing him to higher rank, and to a place of trust near his own person.

But the life of dull inaction that he led was irksome to Kasim Ali; the noise of the cannon thundered in his ears, and from the Khan's tent he could see the batteries day after day playing upon the wall, that had hitherto defied them. There was now a huge breach, through which the whole army might have marched, with little chance of opposition; the ditch became gradually filled up by the rubbish, and the fire of the besiegers was but faintly returned by those within; still, however, at times they showed a bold front, and often sallying forth would do mischief to the advanced posts of the army.

Day after day reports of the progress of the

siege, the camp gossip, the arrival of the remains of that splendid embassy which the Sultaun had sent to Constantinople, and the failure of its purpose, and the immense sums it had cost, were retailed to Kasim by the Khan and others; but he was helpless, and, though he longed again to mix in the strife and to strike a blow for the faith, the power was denied him.

Meanwhile the Sultaun had been a severe sufferer; the sprain of his foot was acutely painful, and subsided only after a tedious confinement, during which his temper had been more than usually capricious. The failure of his noble embassy to Turkey, the immense sum it had cost him, without any equivalent, except a letter of compliment from the Sultaun of Constantinople, the true value of which he could justly appreciate—the continued preparations of the English, the Mahrattas, and the Nizam, and their united power—pressed on him with force and occupied his thoughts by day and his dreams by night.

He had summoned the heaviest of his artillery from Seringapatam, and in time he had

completed a breach, some hundred yards in extent, which invited attack; at length it was made. Opposition there was none, and the army, thirsting for revenge and plunder, poured upon the now defenceless territory of Travancore. Impelled by a smarting sense of the degradation they had suffered in the attack on the wall, and in the subsequent delay which had occurred before the storming of the breach, the army now gave itself up to frightful excesses. The inhabitants were hunted like wild beasts, shot and speared by the merciless soldiery—their women and children destroyed, or sent into a captivity, to which death would have been preferable. Thousands were forcibly made to profess the faith, and amidst the jeers of the rabble were publicly fed with beef and forced to destroy cows, which they had hitherto venerated.

But the necessities of his position began at length to press hard upon the mind of the Sultaun; he was far from his capital; in his present condition he was unable to strike a blow against his enemies; and, though he had endeavoured to mislead the English by plausible

letters, and protestations of undiminished friendship, yet he could not disguise from himself that there was a stern array of preparation against him, which required to be met by decisive and vigorous operations.

"They shall see—the kafir English"—he exclaimed in his Durbar, after the receipt of a letter from his capital, which warned him of danger—"they shall see whether the Lion of the Faith is to be braved or not. Mashalla! we have hitherto been victorious, and the stars show our position yet to be firm; our dreams continue good, our army is faithful and brave, and those who remember the triumphs of Perambaukum and of Bednore will yet strike a blow for the Sultaun.

These addresses were frequent, and the army was in daily expectation of being ordered to return, but as yet it did not move; the most sagacious of his officers, however, urged it at last with such force upon the Sultaun's notice, that he could no longer delay. "We must utterly destroy the wall," he replied to them; "then we will return."

And this was done. It was a magnificent

sight to see that whole army, headed by the Sultaun himself, advance to the various positions upon the wall, which had been previously assigned, for the purpose of razing it to the ground. As the morning broke, the various divisions, without arms, moved to their posts, where pickaxes and shovels had been already prepared for them. All the camp-followers, the merchants, grain-sellers, money-changers, men of all grades, of all castes, were required to join in the work, and in the enthusiasm of the moment rushed to it eagerly. The Sultaun himself, dressed in gorgeous apparel, and sur rounded by his courtiers, his chiefs and slaves, quitted his tent amidst a discharge of cannon which rent the air, the sound of kettle-drums and cymbals, and the shouts of assembled thousands, "Alla Yar! Alla Yar! Deen! Deen!"

Tippoo rode on Hyder, his favourite elephant: the umbaree he sat on was of silver gilt, the cushions of crimson velvet, and the curtains of the finest cloth with gold fringes. The housings of the noble beast, of crimson velvet trimmed with green, swept the ground. Around him were all his officers, on a crowd of ele-

phants and horses, decked with their richest trappings, and wearing cloth-of-gold or muslin dresses, with turbans of the gayest colours, red and pink, white, lilac, or green, sometimes twisted into each other.

The Sultaun dismounted from his elephant, for which a road had been made across the ditch, and seizing a pickaxe ascended the wall. For a while he stood alone, high upon a pinnacle of a tower, in the sight of his whole army, whose shouts rose to the skies, with pride in his heart and exultation flashing from his eye: his favourite astrologer was beneath him, busied with calculations.

"Is it the time, Sheikh?" he asked: "surely it is near."

"My art tells me it will be in a few minutes," was the reply.

There was a breathless silence; at length the Sultaun's arm was uplifted to strike—the fortunate moment had arrived!

"Bismilla-ir-ruhman-ir-raheem, in the name of the most clement and merciful! Strike, O Sultaun!" cried the Sheikh.

The blow descended, and a shout arose, which

mingling with the cannon and the drums almost deafened the hearers; while each man of that great host applied himself to the task and tore down portions of the wall. Gradually, but rapidly, the long extent within sight disappeared, and in six days the whole for nearly twenty miles had been so destroyed as to make it useless for any purpose of defence. This completed, the army began to retrace its steps toward the capital, soon to enter upon new and fiercer scenes.

CHAPTER III.

We must not linger by the way, but at once proceed to the city, where the army has arrived a few days. And now there is bustle, activity and life, where of late all was dull and spiritless. Its arrival has brought gladness to many, but none to her whom we now introduce to the reader.

"And thou hast seen him, Sozun?" said Kummoo, the Khan's wife who has been before mentioned, to her servant, who had always enjoyed her confidence—a woman with a cunning visage and deep-set twinkling eyes; "thou hast seen him—and how looked he? They say he was terribly wounded, and even now is pale and emaciated."

"They say truly, Khanum," said the woman; "your slave watched for him at the door of his house, and pretending to be a beggar asked alms of him in the name of the Beebee Muriam and Moula Ali of Hyderabad; and when he asked me if I were of Hyderabad, I said yes, —may Alla pardon the lie—and he flung me a few pice: lo, here they are. Yes lady, he is pale, very pale: he looks not as if he could live."

"Ya Alla spare him!" cried the lady: "when I last saw him he was a gallant youth; he was then going with the Khan to the Durbar; and as I beheld him urging his noble courser to curvet and bound before this window, my liver turned to water, and, as I live, his image hath been in my heart ever since."

"Toba! Toba! for shame, Beebee," said the woman in a mock accent of reproof. "How can you say so—and you a married woman!"

"And if I am married," cried the lady, while her large lustrous eyes flashed with the sudden light of passion, and her bosom heaved rapidly, "if I am married, what of that? Have I a husband, or one that is less than a man? Have

I children, have I love? have I even a companion? Have I not hate where there should be love—barrenness, where children should have blessed me—a rival, whose beauty is the only theme I hear, to insult me? Have I not all these, Sozunbee? Thou hast had children—they have loved thee, their merry prattle hath sounded in thine ears, they have sucked their life from thee. Thou wast ground by poverty, and yet wast happy—thou hast told it me a thousand times. I am rich, young, and beautiful; yet my lord hath no pleasure in me, and I am a reproach among women. Why should I honour him, Sozun? I love—why should I not be beloved? Ya Alla kureem! why should I not be beloved?"

"It is possible," said the dame.

"Possible!" echoed the lady, panting with excitement, "I tell thee it must be. Listen, Sozun—thou canst be secret; if thou art not, were I turned into the street tomorrow I would dog thee to thy death, and thou well knowest my power is equal to my determination. I love that youth: he is noble, his large eyes speak love, his form is beautiful—

Mejnoon's was not more fair. I could sit and gaze into his eyes, and drink in the intoxication of this passion for ever. Dost thou hear? He must know this; he must feel that I will peril life, fame, all for him. Thou must tell him this, and bring him here, or take me to him, I care not which."

"There will be peril in it, my rose," said Sozun.

"And if there is, dost thou think that would deter me?" cried Kummoo, in a tone of bitter scorn; "were there a thousand more perils than thou, whose blood is now cold, canst see or imagine in my path, I could see none. If thy heart burned as mine doth, Sozunbee," she added after a pause, "thou wouldst think on no peril—thou wouldst only see a heaven of bliss at the end—the path between would be all darkness and indifference to thee."

"I have felt it," said the woman with a sigh.

"Thou?"

"Yes, Beebee. I thought no one would have ever known it but he and I; and he long ago died on the battle-field. Thou hast surprised me into confessing shame."

"Then thou wast successful?"

"Even so," replied the woman, covering her burning face from the earnest gaze of her mistress. "I was young as thou art; he loved me, and we met."

"Then by that love, by the memory of that hour, I conjure thee, Sozunbee, as thou art a woman, and hast loved, aid me in this, and my gratitude shall know no bounds; aid me, and I will bless thee awake and asleep—aid me, or I shall go mad. I have endured thus long without speaking, and methinks as I now speak my brain becomes hot, and it is harder to bear than if I had been silent."

"I will, Khanum, I will," cried the woman; "I will do thy bidding, and only watch my opportunity. At times he walks on the northern rampart alone—I will meet him there."

"Give him these, then, and thou needest not speak much; he is learned, and will understand them. There is a clove, that will tell him I have long loved; there is a pepper-corn, to bid him reply quickly. Now begone; come to me when thou hast seen him, but not till then.

I shall burn with impatience, but I can wait. May Alla speed thee!"

The woman took her departure, and Kummoo, looking from her lattice window, watched her across the large square, till she disappeared behind some buildings.

"Ya Alla, should he despise me, should he spurn me!" she thought; "should he — But no, he will not; he is young, he will hear I am beautiful, and his blood will burn as mine does now. Then he shall know what woman's love is, and we will fly together, whither I care not."

"Kummoo, sister!" said a voice behind her, at which she started, and the blood rushed to her face.

"Why, Hoormut, is it thou? How thou didst startle me. I thought — but no matter: what seekest thou?"

"Hast thou seen Ameena since she arrived?"

"No—why dost thou ask me of one so hateful? Dost thou think I would go to seek her?"

"I know thou wouldst not; but I heard that she had received rich presents from the old dotard, and I went to see them. It was true, they are superb."

"Holy prophet! what are they? Presents! and we have not even clothes fit to wear."

"There were shawls and brocades, and jewels too," returned Hoormut; "and a goldsmith sat in the verandah making gold anklets, whose weight must be immense. I tell thee we are fools to bear this, and to preserve a civil demeanour to them. Hast thou seen the Khan of late?"

"No," replied Kummoo, "we are thrown by and neglected now, for her. It was to be expected that it would come to this, when we received her as if she was welcome, instead of making the Khan eat dirt as he deserved."

"And yet thy mother counselled that it should be so."

"She did; she thought that by means of the law we might get rid of her; but it seems there is no hope, for a man may have four wives lawfully, and this was a regular marriage; the Khan has the papers. But my mother will aid us; trust me that she loves me too well not to resent the insult which has been offered me. By the Prophet, that should be her palankeen crossing the square! it may be

coming hither. It is—it is!" she exclaimed, as she looked from the window; "it has stopped at the gate. She must have news for us, that she comes out from home."

The old lady's heavy tread was soon heard on the stairs, and both flew to meet her at the door. As she entered she embraced both cordially, and they led her to the seat of honour.

A hooka was quickly brought, and as soon as she had taken breath she began to smoke and to speak.

"And art thou well, Kummoobee?" she said to her daughter. "Thou art thin: Mashalla! time was when thou wert fatter. Sozun came to me a short time ago, and said thou wert low-spirited, so I have come to see thee."

"I have little to do but eat vexation," said Kummoo with a pout; "have I not a rival? and is not that enough to make my days unhappy and my nights sleepless?"

"And one who is loaded with rich gifts, while we are denied new clothes," said Hoormut, joining in. "Oh mother, canst thou listen to our shame and not aid us? once thou didst promise thou wouldst."

"It is her beauty which makes that old dotard fond of her," said Kummoo. "For she has no spirit—she is like a sheep; if that were blighted, he would shake her off at once."

"Is there no means of turning him from her?" said Hoormut, drawing nearer; "you, my mother, once said you had a woman servant, who was wise and could command spells; could she not aid us?"

"She is ill," said the old lady; "then she was well. She was preparing the incantations necessary for her purpose when the Khan left this on service; they have been neglected since then, but she may be able to resume them. I will inquire of her."

"Couldst thou not send for her, mother?" said Kummoo.

"She is ill—nevertheless she may come. Yes, let the palankeen go, and here is my ring: let her know that she is wanted."

Kummoo hurried to the door, and dispatching a slave with the ring and a message in her mother's name: they soon heard the bearers depart.

Not much conversation passed till the return

of the palankeen, for the subject was not an agreeable one to any of them, and the ladies had nothing but their own fancied insults and neglects to reflect upon. At last the palankeen arrived, and they soon had the satisfaction to behold the old woman hobble into the room, supporting herself on a stick.

Kummoo and the other flew to assist her. "Welcome, mother!" cried both; "your coming is happiness, may your steps be fortunate!"

"Alla kureem!" sighed the old woman, as she sank down on some soft cushions which had been spread for her. "Alla kureem! I bless the Prophet and the Imaums and the spirits of good that I am here in safety; it is a fearful thing for one so old to venture forth. Art thou well, Kummoobee?" she asked, peering into her face with her yellow eyes, and into Hoormut's also who now sat by her.

"As well as may be, mother," said the girl, "when I am not loved nor honoured in my house; hast thou no charm to preserve the love of men—none to destroy a rival?"

"Then this is why thou wouldst see me,"

exclaimed the old woman; "in trouble only Kureena is sure to be sent for and consulted; is it not so?"

"Thou knowest, for my mother says she has told it you, of the shame, the neglect, the insult and bitterness which we endure daily. We have no honour as wives—we are as faded flowers, thrown aside for a fresh one which he hath lately taken to his bosom."

"Thou art not faded, Kummoo," said the crone, patting her cheek; "thy hand is soft and warm, thine eye is lustrous and full of fire, thou art not faded."

"No, Mashalla! I am not; but cease this trifling: wilt thou aid us? hast thou spells? hast thou blighting, withering curses, to fall on one who has despoiled us of our honour and made us a mockery among women?"

"Ay, Alla knows!" joined in Hoormutbee; "wherever I go I am taunted with this shame; one tells me the Khan's new wife is beautiful—another speaks of the magnificent gifts she has received, and I feel that I could eat my very fingers for shame. Mother, for the sake of the Prophet, aid us!"

"Thou seest the strait they are in, Kureena," said Kummoo's mother.

"Can they do like me?" cried the old woman in a cracked tone; "can they keep fasts and do penances, to fit them for the work, to make the spells sure?—can they dare to be present while these are said in the silence of the night, and when the spirits who obey them are hovering near to receive them?"

The women shuddered; superstitious terror for the moment asserted its full sway over them: but Kummoo's was a daring spirit.

"I can, mother!" she cried, striking her breast; "I dare to follow thee, were there a thousand devils in my path, so that I had my revenge."

The woman peered into her face. "I thought I had been stout-hearted myself," she said; "but, young and ignorant as thou art of this matter, I should have trembled; thou dost not fear."

"I know no dread when I have a purpose before me," said the lady proudly; "art thou thus minded, Hoormutbee?"

"Inshalla! I will do as thou dost," returned

the other; "whither thou leadest, I will follow."

"Enough!" cried the crone; "can we be alone here when the time comes, of which I will forewarn ye?"

"We can," said Kummoo, "without a chance of interruption."

"Good—but no, it will be better done yonder, at thy mother's: there all can be prepared."

"It will be less dangerous there," said the old lady; "thou canst do thy work in the closet which is off the private room. And when, Kureenabee, shalt thou be ready?"

"In a month perhaps: the spell is a heavy one to work, and requires preparation and thought, lest anything should be omitted. Ye must send Fatehas to the shrine, feed Fakeers in your presence, eat cooling victuals, and abstain as much as may be from meat. Thus ye will be prepared; but on me will fall the sore fast and penance: it is hard for an old woman to endure, but ye are in an evil strait, and I were ungrateful for years of protection from your house, Kummoobee, and for the salt I

have eaten, did I refuse you my aid. And now bid me depart, for I have much to do ere night."

"Not till you have eaten," cried Kummoo; "Mashalla! are we inhospitable?"

"Not a mouthful, not a taste," said the old woman rising. "No food must pass my lips, save what is cooked by my own hands till the spell is finished; the vow is upon me, and I must begone."

"Alla Hafiz!" then cried both the ladies, leading her to the door, "we trust to thee; mother, do not forget us." In a few minutes the sound of the bearers was heard, as they rapidly traversed the street below them.

"She is as true as a soldier's sword," said Kummoo's mother, who had been almost a silent listener to the conversation; "she will not disappoint ye. Many a time hath she protected thee, Kummoo, from the evil eye, when it was upon thee—many a time wrought a spell for me, by which thy father's love returned when I had fancied it was grown cold; and thou hast more courage than ever I possessed—thy work will be the surer."

"Inshalla!" said Kummoo, "I feel as though

I had that hated girl within my grasp, and could crush her."

"Hush!" said her mother, "thou shouldst not hate so."

"I hate as I love, mother; and those who reject the one, provoke the other; thou shouldst know me by this time."

Her mother was silent; she knew well the temper of her daughter, and her uncontrollable passions. It is their destiny, she thought, let them work it out; I dare not oppose it. And when the palankeen returned, she took her leave.

Meanwhile, the object of this unprovoked hate was daily becoming more and more precious to the Khan. Returned from active service, while his risala continued absent under the command of his two subordinates, in the seclusion of the zenana he delighted to pass most of his time in Ameena's company, and his sole study seemed to be to provide for her comfort, to deck her with the costliest robes, to have jewels made for her of extreme value, to get up entertainments, to which the other wives were sometimes, but rarely, invited; he could not bear the remembrance of the bitter days

he had passed with them, when Ameena, in her beauty and purity, and mild and gentle disposition, was before him.

Ameena's beauty too now appeared to increase daily; for in the cool and shady zenana her complexion had assumed a more delicate tint, and her skin became softer and more polished. It was ravishing to the Khan to behold her, as she moved about the court of her zenana, tending her few flowers, that bloomed beside a small fountain which always threw up a tiny column of spray, or ministering to the wants of her various favourites. Above her the broad matted leaves of the plantain mingled with the lighter sprays of the cocoa-nut and betel-palm, and a huge tamarind-tree threw its broad shadow over all, forming that refreshing green light so grateful to the eye. The walls of the court were kept carefully white-washed, and the area spread with the finest gravel.

On two sides there were open rooms, supported upon rows of pillars and arabesque arches, which were carved and painted in quaint devices; costly carpets were spread upon their

floors, and in the centre was placed a musnud, covered with white muslin, upon which rested soft cushions of crimson velvet. On a perch was a gorgeous looree, whose brilliant plumage glittered in hues of gold and blue and scarlet; and there were two or three cages hanging within, wrapped round with muslin cloths, and gaily decorated with coloured beads and bells, from which larks poured their merry song, now trilling their own joyous notes, now imitating a hundred sounds of other birds with which they had become familiar. A young gazelle, with a collar of red velvet about its neck, with tiny bells sown to it and fastened around its fore legs above its knees, frisked here and there in merry play; and high above the trees soared a number of beautiful pigeons, enjoying the bright and glowing sun and the fresh air in which they sported.

These were daily sights, and the Khan would lie beholding Ameena's graceful actions, now and then bursting out into a torrent of praise of her beauty, and now joining in her tasks of feeding her birds or her pigeons, or would call them for her when they appeared

to fly far away from her gentle voice. And their time passed peacefully on, marked by no occurrence whereby they could remember its flight—a continued stream of quiet pleasure, down which the Khan suffered himself to glide, enjoying the peaceful contrast to the life of turmoil he had passed in the camp; the more so, as it showed to him the character of Ameena in its true light, that of domestic intercourse, freed from the interruption of others.

Kasim Ali too was his constant guest and companion; his wound had healed after tedious months of suffering; long after the army had arrived at Seringapatam he was unable to resume any duty or his attendance upon the Sultaun, and his time was passed mostly in company with the Khan, assisting him in the business of his risala, writing letters for him, or examining his accounts. He still retained too the happiness of occasional intercourse with Ameena, by means of the old servant; and as often as he received fruit, or any delicacy she thought acceptable to his weak condition, the gift was accompanied by kind messages, which Meeran would

fain persuade him meant more than was apparent.

To Kasim Ali her love was too precious a thought to part with easily, and he clung to it with all the ardour of his soul, for he felt himself alone among that host. He possessed acquaintances it was true, but they were either the wild and debauched characters of the army, whom he had met now and then on service, and in his attendance at the Durbar, with whom he had no congeniality of feeling,—or the friends of the Khan, elderly men, who looked on him as a youth of inexperience, and with whom it would be beneath their importance to associate. But Kasim was content as it was. In the business the Khan provided for him there was enough of employment, and his weak state and constant ill health prevented him from seeking other society. Day after day he was seen in the Khan's Durbar, acting as his secretary, and fulfilling the duties of that important trust far more efficiently than the Mutsuddees* whom the Khan had hitherto employed.

* Clerks.

We have before mentioned the extensive system of peculation practised by Jaffar Sahib, of whom indeed we have long lost sight; but as he was employed in a different sphere from the persons who belong to our history, we have not thought it worth our while to follow him into his career of oppression and spoliation, where he revelled in all the opportunities of gratifying his worst passions: nor was he a singular instance in the army of the Sultaun. Bigots in faith, zealots in the practice of it, there was no greater enjoyment to hundreds than the destruction of the Hindoos in those provinces of Malabar which had gradually been driven into rebellion, and afterwards conquered by the Sultaun as we have already mentioned.

Employed with a portion of the risala, he had carried out to the letter the instructions which the Sultaun had personally communicated to him. Burn, slay, destroy, convert, were the reiterated orders, and they were literally obeyed. Jaffar Sahib had been with the camp only for a few days, when the storming of the breach was expected; and that having taken place, he was sent, with the rest of his own character, to

finish the work in the defenceless territories of Travancore. But he had at last been withdrawn from thence, and was now attached to the large cavalry force which held possession of the plain of Coimbatoor and guarded the passes into the table-land of Mysore.

To the Jemadar's system of deception, however, Kasim Ali fancied he had at length gained a clue, when it was prominently brought to his notice by the Khan himself, who, much disturbed upon the subject, one day handed him a letter he had received from the Bukhshee* of the army, who it seemed had detected the false accounts the Jemadar had furnished.

"The worst of all is," said the Khan, after they had spoken a long while upon the subject, "the demand which the Government will make upon me for the arrears of this peculation, for it would appear that it has gone on for a long time."

"For years, Khan Sahib," replied Kasim; "here they give you the dates. I think I had better go over to the Bukhshee, and get access to the whole of the accounts which have been

* Paymaster.

made out; we may perhaps detect the whole matter, and trace it to its source."

"A wise thought, Kasim—I will go with thee. But that the honour of Rhyman Khan is too well known, this might brand me for ever with infamy."

They went. The Khan was too well known to have such a request refused; and day after day did he, with Kasim and secretaries, pore over the accounts, sometimes thinking they had discovered the cheat, at others almost despairing, so cleverly had the matter been managed. The delay and consequent vexation was beginning to have a serious effect on the Khan; when, after a day of severer toil than usual, Kasim had no doubt remaining that the whole of the papers had been written by the Moonshee, whose disgrace we have mentioned, though the hand-writing was feigned and altered in all; and he mentioned his suspicion to the Khan.

This seemed to throw a new light upon the subject; they knew that the Moonshee was still attached to the person of Jaffar Sahib as a kind of secretary—for he could not write himself—and it became a matter of paramount im-

portance to separate him if possible from the Jemadar; nor was this difficult to manage. A few men of the risala always remained with the Khan, under the charge of Dilawur Ali Duffadar, the rough old soldier we have before mentioned. He bore the Jemadar no very good will, and readily undertook to carry off the Moonshee, unknown to his protector, and bring him to the city.

Accordingly, he took his departure the following morning with six resolute fellows, and by rapid marches soon gained the camp. Here, however, it was no easy task to apprehend the person they sought, for he kept constantly with the Jemadar, and it was necessary he should not know of the proceeding; but they succeeded at last. The Moonshee was decoyed to the outskirts of the camp by one of the men disguised as a Fakeer, where they were met by the Duffadar and his mounted party, and in spite of his prayers, protestations and threats, he was carried rapidly towards the city.

The rage of Jaffar Sahib was excessive when he fancied himself deserted by his dependant;

no one could tell how he had disappeared or whither he had gone; the last known of him was, that he had been seen in the company of a Fakeer, going in a certain direction. Jaffar Sahib was seriously uneasy at his supposed defection, not only because he had now no one on whom he could depend to transact his intricate business, but because this man knew more of his secret transactions than he cared to entrust to any one else, and which if divulged would be his ruin.

The arrival of the Moonshee was a source of true joy to the Khan and Kasim; at first, as might be expected, he knew, or pretended to know, nothing about the matter; but the suspicion was so strong against him, that the Khan, by a short mode of doing justice often practised in India, directed that no water should be given to him till he confessed the whole.

The threat was in the end sufficient; the fellow held out most vehemently for about a day, and then, overcome by terror at their determination, and threats that this was only the commencement of his punishments, declared he would confess all; and he unfolded secretly to the

Khan and Kasim the whole of the deceits which had been practised from the first. Every account was gone through, and a fearful array of peculation registered against the Jemadar, who was written to, to make the best of his way to the city to answer the complaint against him. Ere the messenger reached the camp, however, the Jemadar had arrived at the city; for his active emissaries had traced the arrival of Dilawur Ali and his party, and their sudden departure, and it was evident that they must have carried off the Moonshee.

CHAPTER IV.

The detection of his long concealed and successful peculations was a thunderbolt to the Jemadar. The Khan refused to see him, or to hear any exculpation he had to urge; and then, knowing the influence Kasim Ali possessed with his commander, he sought him, and implore him to use his influence with the Khan for pardon and for silence on the subject; he became abject, he even threw himself at the young man's feet, and when these failed, offered him a bribe to accede to his terms. It wanted but this to excite Kasim Ali's full indignation: he had despised the man for his meanness, but the insult aroused him, and he spurned the offer fiercely.

"Cheat and rogue!" he cried, "many a man

is whipped through the bazaars for less than this. Inshalla! I shall live to see this done upon thee. I have not forgotten thee, and thou art too well known in the army for any good men to feel regret at thy fate. Men say that thou art a devil, and not a man. By Alla I believe them. Begone! wert thou the Sultaun's son I would spurn thee."

There was no one near, and the Jemadar eyed Kasim as the thought flashed into his mind that a thrust of his sword or dagger would silence him for ever, and that without his aid the Khan would easily be persuaded to drop the prosecution. Kasim was weak too, and might easily be overcome, and his hand stole to his sword-hilt; but the string which secured it to the scabbard was fast, and he could not draw it; with a muttered curse he clutched a long knife he wore in his girdle, and, on pretence of repeating his request, advanced a step; his eye glistened like that of a tiger about to spring; another moment might have been fatal to Kasim Ali, but he saw the action, and instantly seizing his sword which lay before him he started to his feet.

"I see thy cowardly intention, Jemadar," he said; "as yet, I will not draw this weapon, which would be polluted by a coward's blood; but advance one step, and by Alla and the Apostle thou mayest say the Kulma, for thou diest. Begone! in the name of the Prophet, and seek not thine own death."

The coward attempted to stammer out an excuse, to protest that he had been misunderstood; but he could say nothing intelligible, and he slunk away defeated and mortified, with deadly hate rankling at his heart and urging him to revenge.

"That I should have been foiled by that boy!" he said aloud, as he quitted the house; "that I should have been destined to devour such abomination! that I, Jaffar Sahib, should have been thus trampled upon. Ya Ali! ya Hoosein! grant me power of revenge. Yea, his blood will hardly wipe out the insult I have suffered. Yes, tell him so," he cried to a woman who he thought watched him; "tell him so—tell him Jaffar Sahib curses him, and, as there is a light in heaven, will have his revenge for what has happened."

"Jaffar Sahib!" cried the woman, rushing forward—"thou canst not be he? thou canst not be he whom I thought dead years ago?"

"Begone! I know thee not; thou art one of his followers, and I curse thee;" and flinging her off, for she had clung to his arm, so violently that she stumbled against a stone and fell, he strode on at a rapid pace.

She arose slowly, and looked after him as he hurried on. "Holy Prophet!" she said, as she brushed away the dust and her loose hair from her eyes, "it must be he; his look when he was excited, his very tones, his name too, all are his. Jaffar Sahib! that name hath not sounded in mine ears since we met last, when the bright moon was above us, and the trees casting their deep shade over us veiled that from her prying glare which even now shames me to remember. Holy Alla! he did not remember Sozun; how should he? years have passed since we were young, and they have not been without effect; and to meet thus, when I had thought him dead long, long ago, and mourned him in my heart! Ya Alla! what destiny is this before me? Be it what it

may," she continued, walking a few paces, "I will see him, and he shall know that Sozun still lives."

Jaffar Sahib had but one resource left; and as he hurried along his mind became resolutely bent upon attempting it. To urge the Khan again was impossible, and against Kasim his desire of revenge became more wild and implacable every moment. "My only refuge is in the Sultaun; I will go to him and confess my fault. If I am fortunate—and who shall dare to say that the destiny of Jaffar Sahib is evil?—there is no worse to be apprehended than if I were proceeded against publicly. I may be fortunate and prevent all." And thus saying and meditating how he should open his statement, he arrived before the gate of the palace, and entered it hastily; being well known no opposition was made to him, and he passed on to the apartment of those who waited upon the Sultaun, for he well knew that at that hour he must be alone, or in consultation with Purnea, or Kishun Rao, his advisers and ministers.

"Is the Sultaun alone, Abdool Hoosein?"

he said, addressing the monarch's chief and confidential attendant, who, with a crowd of others, waited without.

"He is engaged in writing," said the functionary; "it would be as much as my life is worth to disturb him. This day he has received letters which have sorely distressed him, and he is not in his right senses."

"I must see him," said the Jemadar; "my business is of the utmost importance."

"You must write then, for it is impossible for me to mention it," returned the man doggedly.

"Abdool Hoosein," said Jaffar Sahib, taking him aside, "thou knowest we have been friends hitherto, and, Inshalla! mean to continue so. I cannot write what I have to say—it would be impossible; but here is a trifle;" and he slipped a gold coin into his hand.

"It is not enough," said the attendant, glancing his eye from the money to the giver, for he well knew with whom he had to deal; "it is not enough—take it back."

"Nay, be not hasty," returned the other; "here is more, but I have no gold."

"'T is the worse for thee, Jaffar Sahib; I do not move under three gold pieces, and no one else dares to —"

"Take them then in the name of the Shitan," cried the Jemadar. "Go! say that I am here, and have a petition to make."

"The Sultaun thinks thou art at the camp," said the attendant; "'t was but yesterday he spoke of thee."

"He will soon know why I am here," replied the Jemadar; "but begone! I have neither time nor inclination to bandy words with thee."

The man went and returned. "Go," he said, "in the name of Sheikh Suddoo, the father of mischief; I would not be present at your interview with the Sultaun for much. Away! he hath sent for thee."

How the heart of the coward beat as he heard these words; but there was now no means of retreat, and he proceeded.

The Sultaun sat in a small room which communicated with the private apartments of the palace; the walls were plain, but the ceiling was richly painted and ornamented, and the

casements and shutters of the windows also. On the floor there was spread a clean white calico covering; and at one end, upon a carpet supported by cushions, surrounded by heaps of papers, and holding in his left hand a stiff leather case, which supported the paper on which he was writing, sat the Sultaun.

Jaffar Sahib hesitated for a moment at the door, for he had looked through a chink, and seen that there was a frown on the Sultaun's brow, and that peculiar expression about his mouth which was always the precursor of mischief; but there was no time allowed him for reflection. The Sultaun had heard and called to him; and the Jemadar, hastily entering, at once threw himself at full length flat on the ground before him, with his arms and legs extended, and lay there motionless and silent.

"Why, Madur-bukht, what ails thee? in the name of the Prophet speak and tell; we thought thee at the camp. Why hast thou come here without leave? why hast thou transgressed orders, and the regulations of our army, which were drawn up with our own wisdom and are perfect models of military

knowledge. Speak, O Kumbukht! O man without a destiny! why art thou come?"

"Pardon, O Asylum of the World!" cried the Jemadar, not daring to look up; "thy slave's fault is great, and his liver is turned to water; I crave forgiveness ere I can tell my errand. My lord is generous — he will forgive magnanimously and will not punish the error of his slave."

"Get up, in the name of the Prophet! and tell thy tale; do not lie snivelling there like a Hindoo: by Alla! thou remindest me of the Brahmin who said thou hadst plundered him, and whom we — but no matter. Get up! or by the Apostle I will prick thee with my sword:" and he drew it.

"Alla and the Prophet be my refuge, and the saints Hassan and Hoosein!" cried the man, rising up and joining his hands, while he trembled fearfully; "if thou art against me, O Sultaun, I have no refuge in the world; may I be your sacrifice! I will speak the truth; why should I tell a lie?"

"Speak, then, and say it, Madur-Bukhta!" cried the Sultaun impatiently; "dost thou

think that we, the beloved of Alla, on whom rest the cares and protection of this kingdom, and of the true faith in Hind—dost thou think that we have nought to do but listen to thy prating? Quick!"

"Huzrut!" said the Jemadar, his agitation almost denying him utterance; "thou mayest order me to be blown away from a gun, if what I say be not true."

"Well!" exclaimed the Sultaun, "what more?"

"I am disgraced—my character is gone—I have no friend—no, not one. Rhyman Khan and his minion Kasim Ali have leagued together to blast my reputation and to ruin me."

"Hold!" cried Tippoo; "the one is a man I am proud to call my friend, the other saved my life; beware how thou namest them."

"May I be your sacrifice! thou mayst hang me if it be not the truth; listen and judge:—when I was with the camp, engaged in the Sircar's affairs, my Moonshee, a humble man, disappeared; your slave thought he had been murdered, and became uneasy; he discovered in a few days that the Khan had sent a party

of the risala and carried him away privately; since then he and Kasim Ali have kept him here, tortured him, and made him draw up a declaration that your slave had made false accounts."

"Ha!" said the Sultaun; "but go on."

"Yes, false accounts, protector of the poor! I who have fed on the Sircar's bounty, I who have eaten the Sircar's salt, who am a Khanazad*,—that I should do so base an act!"

"Peace!" exclaimed the Sultaun; "I see by thine eye, Jaffar Sahib, that thou art guilty; there is no hiding truth from me. As I slept one night, the dream is recorded, the angel Gabriel appeared to me. 'Thou art a Sultaun,' he said, 'and the destinies of thousands and millions are in thy hands; thou shalt be able from henceforth to detect a lie at once,' and so saying he vanished; and I, who am a child of clay, and not worthy of the honour, feel that he said truly. Dost thou not tremble as I read thy heart in thine eye, and see that thou art a thief? yes, thou dost wince—the thief of the Sircar Khoda-

* One born in the family.

dad*. Shall I have thee taken into the square, Kumbukht, and set in a high place, and a proclamation made that thou art a thief? Toba! Toba! wert thou not content with the plunder of the infidels, but thou must needs steal from us? Ya Alla kureem! grant us patience to bear this."

"Enough! enough, O fountain of mercy!" said the trembling wretch; "enough; I beseech you by my long and faithful service to forgive me, to pardon the past, to keep me from shame. I am your slave, I lick the dust of your feet! Holy Alla! be my aid, and ye saints and martyrs in whose name I have slain and despoiled infidels!"

"Who is this grovelling wretch?" said Meer Sadik the Dewan, and Kishun Rao the Treasurer, who then entered.

"Ay, who is he? ye may well ask," replied the Sultaun; "one who, Inshalla! has owned himself to be a thief,—to have taken the Sircar's money,—to have been unfaithful to his salt." And then, though the miserable Jemadar pleaded hard for mercy, he told all he had

* The Government, the gift of God.

guessed at, and invented the rest, joking the while upon the affair, at the expense of the culprit, who could have borne wrath, but not the cold and bitter irony of the Sultaun and those who heard it.

"Alla! Alla! this is worse than death," he cried at length; "bid me be blown away from a gun, it will be an end to all misery and persecution."

"Not so fast, Jaffar Sahib," said the Sultaun; "we intend, Inshalla! to make thee pay back the money thou hast taken, and to keep thee alive to serve us and eat our salt. What say ye, sirs?" he cried to the others.

"I beg to represent," said Kishun Rao, "that your slave hath learned with grief of the peculation which has been discovered in the department of the paymaster, from the false accounts of the risalas and the infantry, and was about making a report upon the subject; but enough; here is one culprit, let him smart for it, and the rest will be more careful."

"Not so! Rao Sahib," said the Sultaun; "not so; this man we will pardon, because we have the memory of many of his services in our

heart, where, Shookr Khoda! the services of each man of our invincible army is treasured up; this time we will spare his fame. Dost thou hear?" he cried to Jaffar Sahib; "thou art free to go, and we shall desire Abdool Rhyman Khan to suspend his proceedings; but thou shalt pay to our treasurer two thousand hoons* by tomorrow at this time, if not it will be worse for thee."

"I call the Prophet to witness," cried Jaffar Sahib, "I have not half the quarter of that sum; five hundred I might perhaps—"

"Peace!" exclaimed the Sultaun; "how darest thou to swear to a lie in the presence of the friend of the Apostle? I have spoken."

"I have it not—where am I to find such a sum?"

"In Hell!" roared the Sultaun, "where I will send thee to seek it, if thou delayest one moment beyond the time. Begone! Look thou to this Kishun Rao—we have spoken, and we will be obeyed; we shall expect thy report punctually."

Jaffar Sahib silently made his obeisance, and

* A Hoon is about four rupees.

retired burning with shame and anger, and renewed threats against Kasim, the author of all. Alone he could have borne the Sultaun's irony and bitter words, but that others should know of his detection and disgrace was more than he could endure. He did not wait to speak to those in the ante-chamber, but hurried at once to his temporary lodging in the bazaar.

"We have sent for you, my friends," said the Sultaun to his ministers, after a short pause, "to advise with us regarding momentous affairs which press upon our notice; not that we need advice—for, by the blessing of the Prophet! whose agent we are upon earth, and the favour of the Most High, we receive such intimations of our destiny in dreams, and by secret and holy communings with the saints, that our path is clearly marked out for us; but there are, nevertheless, matters which we have heard of within the last few days that disturb our rest. The kafir Feringhees of Madras have written to us, and remonstrated sharply for our attack upon Travancore; they have the insolence to demand satisfaction for it, and the price of what was destroyed. Vain arrogance! they should

know us better, than to think a mere threat could disturb the ruler of the kingdom which Alla hath given into our hand. They are making mighty preparations for war; they have incited the kafir Mahrattas (may their end be perdition!) and the imbecile ruler of Hyderabad to join against me. Nay, be not surprised; for though these have been the reports of the bazaars for months, yet we did not believe them; but here are the proofs:" and he handed to them the letters he had received, containing the intelligence, which they perused in silence.

"And now listen," he continued, his mean features lighting up with a sudden excitement; "listen to the revelation we have had from Alla himself. These letters arrived but yesterday; and as we lay cogitating upon their contents, and praying to Alla to enable us to devise some means of extrication from the difficulty, our eyes closed and we fell asleep. Soon, however, gorgeous visions began to crowd upon us, and shapes of glory, which, though almost indefinite, yet hovered around, filling the mind with wondrous de-

light; as we looked, we heard a voice which said, 'Art thou hungry, O Sultaun?' and then I bowed down and cried, saying, 'I lack food, O Alla! but it is revenge for the blood of the martyrs shed in thy cause, and I am hungry for aid, that all thine enemies may be subdued, and the banner of the faith float proudly over the realms of Hind, even as it did of yore under the power of Delhi;' and then, even as I finished speaking, three trays, whose surface sparkled with the light of Heaven, and upon which were piled fresh dates, the food of the true believers in paradise, descended to me, and the angel said,—'Eat, O beloved of the Apostle! and thou wilt be able to discern the hidden meaning of this vision:' and I ate; and lo! there came light into my heart, and I knew that the three trays of dates were the dominions of the three confederates my enemies, and they were sweet to the taste, even as victory is sweet to the soldier."

"Ajaib! most wonderful! most extraordinary!" echoed the two listeners, who were provoked enough at this puerile harangue. "Inshalla! there is no fear."

"Fear!" cried the Sultaun bitterly; "fear! no, there is no fear; there is joy that at last we shall have them in our power. In a few months the King of the Afghans will rise in our favour, and, leagued with the Rajah of Nipaul, and the rulers of Joudhpoor and Jynuggur, who shall be able to withstand them? The French will rise with ten thousand men; our valiant troops are a lakh and more. Pressed on all sides, our enemies will fall; and then for revenge and plunder!" As he spoke his eyes flashed fire, his action was high and restless, and even that sedate counsellor the Dewan caught a portion of his excitement.

"Upon them then," he cried, "in the name of Alla! Syud Sahib is below the passes with all the cavalry. Bangalore hath a gallant commander, and the garrison is staunch and true; there is plenty of powder and ball; to the north are all the Droogs *, for the Mahrattas and Nizam to break their force against. Inshalla then! unfurl the standard of the faith in Durbar this night, and cry Alla Yar! He who is faithful to his creed and his Sultaun will follow thee to the death."

* Hill-forts.

"Asylum of the world!" said an attendant, entering; "these letters have just arrived, and are said to contain news from the army; there hath been fighting." And he laid them at Tippoo's feet.

"Ha!" cried the Sultaun exultingly, taking them up and tearing the covers off as he looked at the seal; "Syud Sahib! then the English must have advanced. Now listen, my friends, to news of victory. Inshalla! the Syud is a brave man and a skilful general —" But, as he read silently, they saw his features change in expression; his brow contract; his lips become compressed; a nervous twitching of his face commenced, which always expressed his violent agitation, and they exchanged significant glances with each other. At last he was no longer able to bear his vexation, and broke out into a paroxysm of rage.

"Ya Futteh-o! Ya Alla Mousoof! A hog, and not a man, hath done this—a coward and a fool! not Syud Sahib, but Syud Ahmuk!—beaten—disgraced—foiled by the kafir English—forced to retire beyond the Bhowanee, and he is now close upon the Guzalhuttee pass. O saints

and martyrs! grant me patience to read, to hear all:" and he read on. "Reinforcements? infantry and guns?—that they may be led into evil, and lost to me! Never, by the Prophet! never, by the soul of my father!—may his sepulchre be honoured! Thou mayest even fight it out, Syud, or return disgraced; thou shalt have the option. What think you, sirs?"

"It is heavy news," said Meer Sadik, "and enough to ruffle my lord's temper; but the Syud is wary and cautious. Perhaps the English force is overwhelming, and he has wisely retired before it, drawing them into a snare, from whence it will be impossible to escape."

"Ha! thinkest thou so? By Alla! a good thought; he shall have the men and the guns; we will write the order now to the commanders of the Cushoons* to attend the evening Durbar."

"I beg to represent," said Kishun Rao, "that in such an undertaking there is no one like thyself Oh Sultaun; under thine own eye all will go well; without thee, there is fear and hesitation, for the responsibility is great."

* His division of regular infantry were so called.

"Well spoken," responded the monarch; "we have—blessed be the Dispenser of Wisdom!—such military skill, that before it the genius of the kafir English is nothing, and their livers become water. Was it not so in Baillie's affair? Inshalla! then, we will lead this expedition, and there will be many such."

"And," continued the Rao, "what is there to prevent the victorious army, when it has driven the English beyond the boundary, to follow them to the gate of Madras—to burn, to slay, to plunder, and destroy all? The French, their bitter enemies, will rise upon them; and when the success is noised abroad, the Mahrattas, who hate them, and the Nizam, who is now under their power, will cast them off; and then what is to prevent the army of the Sircar Khodadad from driving them into the sea, and, with the power thus gained, of turning upon the faithless Nizam and destroying his power utterly? then shall Madras be the seaport of the Sultaun, and he may pitch his tents on the plain of Surroonuggur, and take his pleasure in the palace of the proud ruler of Hyderabad.

"Mashalla! Mashalla! Inspiration! Inspiration!" exclaimed the Sultaun in rapture; "it shall be done; the thing is easy. Our dreams forewarned us of this, and behold, our destiny points to it. One victory gained, and the Mahrattas are on our side; Sindia and his power can be thrown into the scale: then with the Afghans, the Rohillas, the brave men of the Dekhan, the Assud Illahee, and the French —Ya Futteh-o! thou wilt grant victory, and our power will reach a pitch such as men will wonder at and admire.

But stay, whose letter is this by the same post?" and he opened the envelope. The look of exultation at once gave way to passion. "Here is another coward, another traitor!—Palghatcherry has fallen! the place we ourselves saw provisioned and garrisoned with the best troops; —shame on them! shame on them! they are women, not men. By Alla! I have women in the Mahal, who would have died ere they had suffered a kafir to enter. Now there is a road opened from sea to sea, and the infidel English will not be slow to avail themselves of it. Yet

this does but hasten our intentions. Ye have your leave now to retire, my friends. Go, and say there will be a Durbar tonight,—no, tomorrow at noon; for, by the blessing of the Prophet! ere then a new dream may be vouchsafed for our guidance, Khoda Hafiz!"

They withdrew with many obeisances, and the strange being was left to his meditations, and to the wild visions of conquest, which the words of the Rao had resolved into matters apparently within his grasp.

Jaffar Sahib reached his abode in feelings it would be difficult to describe; the money was but a trifle to him in amount, for in his career of rapacity and plunder he had amassed thousands; but it was so lent out among bankers, suttlers, the men of the risala, and those of the bazaar, that he feared he should hardly be able to raise it in time to meet the Sultaun's demand, and without it he had little hope that mercy would be extended to him. As he dismounted from his horse, his attendant Madar met him.

"A woman is within," he said, pointing to

the door of the apartment; "she came here a short while ago, and would take no denial, saying she would wait for thee."

"A woman! in the name of the Shitan what doth she want?—is she young and fair?"

"Willa-alum!" replied the man, grinning, "Your worship will see; she is veiled from head to foot."

"Most strange! away with ye all from hence, it may be the matter is private, and we would be alone." As he spoke, he entered the door. There was a small room, at the back of the open shop he had hired; a door led from that into a small court, where was a shed for cooking or bathing, and a low verandah. There was no one in the room; he opened the door, and looked around. Close beside it, in the verandah, sat a woman, veiled from head to foot in a thick sheet; she appeared to be trembling violently, for the covering was much agitated.

"Who, in the name of Satan, art thou," cried the Jemadar, "who comest at this unseasonable hour?" She did not reply, and he spoke again more roughly.

"Alla be merciful to me! Jaffar," she exclaimed, throwing herself at his feet, and clasping his knees, while she cast the veil from her, "it is indeed thou! hast thou forgotten Sozun?"

"Sozun! Sozun!" he repeated, as he drew his hand across his forehead, "she of Salem? Holy Alla! hast thou risen from the dead? is this a dream?"

"No! no! look on me. My features are wasted, but I am the same; thou didst spurn me a while ago like a dog, and my heart was broken. There was kindness between us once, Jaffar!" and she sighed deeply.

"I knew thee not," he said, raising her up, and, for the moment yielding to a softer feeling, caressed her. "I had been maddened! insulted by that dog of a Patél, Kasim Ali. I knew thee not, Sozun."

"Ha! dost thou know him?"

"To my cost; he and his dotard patron, Rhyman Khan, have despoiled me of money—vilified my character; but enough, 'tis no affair of thine. Why dost thou ask?"

"I have too a reckoning to settle with him,

but let it pass; we will speak of that which once was pleasant to us. Thou hast not forgotten me then, Jaffar?"

"Alla is my witness—never! But canst thou come hither this night at dusk, unobserved? then we will speak of past times uninterruptedly; now I have affairs of moment to settle, and must begone."

"I will come surely," was the reply; "thy voice is music in mine ears after so long a separation."

"Follow me then, and I will dimiss thee openly before my servants; but be sure thou dost not fail tonight."

CHAPTER V.

Looking from her latticed chamber sat Kummoobee, her heart beating so that its pulsations seemed audible to her own ear, her bosom heaving as though it would almost burst the bounds of the light boddice which inclosed it, and her eye flashing brightly, as she thought upon the sure success of her mission. Little she heeded the soft and chastening light which the moon's rays cast upon every object around, silvering the tall white minarets of the mosque, till they stood out in perfect relief against the deep blue of the sky, and resting upon the sharp pinnacles of the ancient temples, where all else was lost in shadow. The large courts around them, into which she looked in the day-time, then filled with busy throngs, were now

deserted, save by the broad giant shadows which the temple and the trees around it cast across them. Now and then the shrouded form of a Brahmin would pass noiselessly through them, the moon's light resting brightly upon the white drapery around him; but as he hurried on, the deep black shadow seemed to enshroud him, and he was no longer discernible within its influence.

As Kummoo sat thus, she would idly speculate, with vacant eye fixed upon some figure in the square beyond, or listen to the hoarse and distant noubut, which, as the night advanced, beat at the tomb of the Sultaun's father, or to the wailing and quivering sound of the brass horns which arose from the camp, when the watch was being relieved. She heeded not the luscious perfume of orange flowers and tuberoses, which, loading the air, came in at her open window from the garden beneath; but her whole senses were absorbed in one object, which she rather wooed than strove to turn away from her mental vision; at times too a tear would fill her large lustrous eye, and, welling over the lid, trickle down her face un-

heeded—a tear of burning passion—no soother to her excited mind, but rather aggravating those feelings which had now become almost too painful to be borne.

"What can delay her?" she said, speaking half aloud to herself; "by this time I might have been with him. Ya Fatima, aid me! my liver is burnt with passion, and the air which comes to me seems hot—hot with my own breath; I can bear this no longer. Why does she tarry?—she is old, or she might be dallying with him. What if she were? but no, that cannot be—she dared not. She knows well I would tear her limb from limb if she harboured even a thought of his love; and she is faithful too. I must wait; he was away perhaps—he may have been here—here, under this roof, where he little dreamed there existed one whose greatest happiness would be to die at his feet. Holy Alla, who is that?" she cried, as a long train of musing into which she had fallen was suddenly interrupted by the opening of her chamber door. "Who comes?"

"Sozunbee," was the reply.

"Sozunbee!" she said, while the blood

poured through her frame in wild pulsations; "and 'tis thou at last! Hither, quick! quick! sit here, and tell me all. I have long, long looked for thee; why hast thou tarried? I am ready now—even now; come, let us haste—what? thou dost not speak! Woman! hast thou done my bidding?—hast thou seen him?—if not, tell me, and I shall be cool—now I am burning!—Ya Alla kureem, burning!" and she fanned herself violently, while her articulation showed that her mouth was quite parched. "Speak! why dost thou not speak?"

"I have seen him," was the reply.

"Well! Oh for patience to listen! By Alla! thou canst never have loved, Sozunbee, or thou wouldst know what it is to have fire within thee—fire!—wilt thou not quench it?"

"It will be hard for thee to hear all, lady; shall I tell it?"

"All—all! thou sawest him—well! why dost thou hesitate?"

"I would spare thee pain; go now to rest, thou wilt be calm tomorrow."

"Pain! what dost thou mean? Pain!—he cannot—" she almost gasped in a hoarse whisper, while her eyes flashed so that Sozun could

hardly bear their intense gaze; "he cannot have denied me! he dare not have flung aside love like mine! Holy Prophet! Sozun, thou dost jest!" and she laughed wildly.

"May the holy Mother of Ali, and the Lady Murium, and the Saints aid thee, my life!" said the woman, rising and passing her hands over her head, to withdraw the evil from her. "May they give thee peace! As I live I saw him and spoke with him, but thou must be calm ere I tell it thee."

"I am calm—see, I am quite calm," she said, making a violent effort to swallow; "feel my hand—it is cool—I can listen."

But her hand belied her words; it burned as though she were in a fever, and the quick and strong pulsations of her blood were distinctly perceptible; to delay, however, was but to excite her more.

"I went," said Sozun, "to his abode; long I watched at the door: men came, and went; the Khan was there; there was haste and bustle, and much deliberation. At last all departed; a Khitmutgar * observed me, and

* Attendant.

asked me what I did there? I said I would speak with the Syud, that I had a matter to tell him of; he went in, and I followed. I was closely veiled. 'Wait here,' said the man, 'I will inform him.' I waited; the moments were like hours. 'Go in,' said the man when he returned, 'he is alone.' I trembled as I proceeded, and found myself in his small apartment ere I was aware. The Syud was writing. 'Stop! who art thou?' he asked, and his words were sweet as the sound of childrens' voices at play. I salaamed thrice."

"Quick! quick! good Sozun, what said he?" asked the lady eagerly. "I care not what thou didst."

"Thou shalt hear. 'I am your slave,' said I, 'and bring thee a message—wilt thou listen?' 'Say on,' he replied, 'I hear thee; 'sit down and speak, hast thou any complaint?' 'No, no!' I said, 'I have none; cease writing, and listen.' He did so: then I untied the corner of my dooputta, and gave him what thou hadst sent. 'Dost thou understand the tokens?' I asked.

"Beebee! he looked sorrowfully on them.

'They speak of love,' he said; 'why hast thou brought them to one who is dying?'

"'She is fair,' I said—'most lovely. Her eyes are large, her lips are red; in beauty she is like a rose when it opens to meet the morning sun which drinks the fragrant dew from its cup. She has seen thee, O Syud, and her liver has become water.'

"'What misfortune is around me!' he said. There was no anger in his tone, but sorrow. 'I have no love now but for one; but let that pass. Go to her who sent thee: say I pity her —say, as we have never met, and I know her not, so let her turn her thoughts to another; she will see many in the Durbar.'

"He had thought thee one of the palace dancers; thou knowest they are high and proud, and men account themselves fortunate to win a smile from them: I eagerly undeceived him.

"'She is no Tuwaif,' I said; 'she is a householder, and as far above them in beauty as the moon is above a star.'"

"And what said he, Sozun?"

"Then he grew grave, my pearl, and said ternly, 'Such love is sinful—it is impure; bid

her forget it. She hath a lord—what am I to her? Why hath she looked on me with eyes of passion? Begone! say to her, Kasim Ali Patél is no man of dishonour, but pure and unstained; as yet, no dissolute or debauched gallant. Away! thou art an offence to me.' Beebee! I tried to speak; he would hear nought. 'Begone! begone!' alone sounded in mine ears, and his eyes were so large and so severe that I trembled."

"And was this all, Sozun? was this all? Ah fool! ah fool! why didst thou not say I was a Tuwaif—anything—a slave—he would have heard thee. Ah fool! couldst thou not have pleaded for me in words—hot, burning words, such as would have inflamed his heart, dried up the cold dew of his virtue, and turned him to me with a love as violent as mine own? Couldst thou not have said that I live upon his look?—one look I had, only one, which mine own thoughts have magnified into years of intercourse—couldst thou not tell him that I am one who will brook no control? Ya Rehman Alla! couldst thou —"

"But he said he loved another," interrupted Sozun, vainly endeavouring to stem the torrent of her mistress' words.

"What, another! O woman, thou didst not say so—thou didst not dare to say it. He loves another! Then he *can* love, if he has loved another. Who is she? couldst thou discover her, O dull one? A Tuwaif perhaps—some vile and worthless one, some scum of perdition! No, he is too noble for that.—Water, Sozun, water! By Alla I choke! Enough—now take the vessel. Thou saidst another. Ha! if it were she! *if* it were her! What dost thou think?"

"Who?"

"Ameena! it must be—it can be no other. She is beautiful, very beautiful; he hath saved her life, twice saved it. They have been in camps together, and he must have met her, and then — Dost thou not see all, Sozun, clear to thine eye as daylight? Does it not all open gradually upon thee, as when the dawn of morning dispels the darkness, objects that were before dim and shadowy assume palpable forms?"

"There is suspicion surely, Khanum, but we have never heard aught breathed against her."

"No, she hath been discreet; but may it not

be so? I ask thee calmly, when Alla knows my heart is on fire."

"It may, but—"

"Enough! enough! we will watch; and she who was born to be my curse—she who hath thrown me from my seat of pride, and intruded between me and my rights—may perchance be rudely thrown from her elevation. Grant it, O Prophet! O ye saints and holy men, grant it! Yes, we will watch now, Sozun; wilt thou not aid me?"

"To the last."

"Enough then now; this hath calmed me somewhat for the while: revenge is dimly seen in the distance, but it will come, it will come! Now lie down beside me and sleep; the night is far spent, I am weary of watching, and my heart aches, Sozun."

"Alla keep thee, lady!" returned the other; "I will watch beside thee for awhile, for I feel not sleepy, and the air is pleasant."

And she watched silently, for her thoughts were busy with the events of that night—her strange meeting with Jaffar, his now apparently reckless character, and the threats he had held

out against the young Patél; for she had been with him long, and if they had not renewed the passionate love of former years, he had caressed her, and vowed to befriend the only being for whom he had ever felt affection.

The fresh breeze of night, laden with perfume from tree and flower, poured in gentle whispers through the casement, murmuring and sighing above it amidst the slender leaves of the palms. Abroad all was still, except now and then the bark of a dog, or the call of the sentinels upon the walls to each other that all was well. Gradually the moon's glorious light crept round to the window, and stealing into the room it wandered over the recumbent figure of the lady till it rested upon her face. "She sleeps now," thought Sozun, "or the light would disturb her; peacefully too! and oh how lovely her features and those long lashes appear, as the light plays among them, and kisses them in very wantonness. I would he could see her now—he, with those glorious eyes so full of expression, into which no woman could look without love! her fate is in the power of her destiny. May it be propitious! Our paths

are dark and rugged before us, yet we must walk on without a light or a guide. And now I will to rest also, for mind and body are both weary."

Men poured into the Fort from every side the following morning, both officers and men; for the order had gone forth for all to hear the determination of the Sultaun upon the crisis. Elephants and horses, gay palankeens, their bearers striving with each other for precedence, proceeded to the Durbar, exerting their utmost speed with loud cries; and glittering armour, cloth of gold and silver, and the most brilliant silks, satins and muslins, shone in the bright sun, as the turbans, the vests, or the scarfs of the wearers. Rumour had gone forth that the Sultaun himself would proceed against the infidels, and every man was eager to be led to war and plunder—victory in the one, and rich booty in the other, being his by anticipation.

Crowds hurried on. The hall of audience in the palace had long been filled, and the people reached from the entrance far beyond into the court-yard. Cries of "Deen! Deen! Alla Yar!

Alla Yar!" rose perpetually from among the mass, and mingled with the sound of the kettle-drums and shrill pipes, which continued playing while the Durbar was open. The Sultaun was seated upon his throne, over which, suspended by a fine wire, so as to appear really to flutter over him, was hung a golden bird, whose wings and tail, set with precious gems, glittered as the wind stirred it to and fro. This was the Humma, or sacred bird of Paradise, whose shadow, so long as it falls upon a monarch, prevents his sustaining any injury, and to which many miraculous powers were ascribed by the lower order of soldiery, or those who had risen from it. Around Tippoo—some engaged in fanning him, others gently moving peacocks' feathers or tails of the Thibet cow to and fro, to prevent the flies from settling on him—were a number of fair and youthful creatures, whose ruddy or pale cheeks showed their origin to have been in the cold and distant climate of the West. They were all dressed sumptuously as women, they had been instructed in the arts of music and dancing, and were thus held up to the scorn of the people generally, who were taught,

by frequent allusions to them, that all English were effeminate cowards, fit only to be dressed as women and to be engaged in such frivolous occupations. Some of the boys were young, and had known no other existence than that debased slavery. These took pride in their gorgeous dresses, and moved about to display them; others, apparently overpowered by shame at their disgraceful situation, hung down their heads and strove to conceal their faces from the prying glances of the spectators. A miserable lot was theirs: many of them, retaining a vivid remembrance of their countrymen, their faith and their freedom, were obliged to perform a routine of bitterly degrading duties, dancing and singing before the Sultaun for the amusement of the Court; and although many of the spectators pitied the poor boys and their sad fate, yet no one dared to utter a word of sympathy in their behalf, while there were too many who rejoiced in their abject condition.

Seated near the monarch were his sons, three fine youths; and in double and treble rows

from the throne, the officers of the army, of the state, his own flatterers and sycophants, and a host of others, as closely packed as it was possible to stand or sit. From time to time some of the boys would perform a dance before him, or a few jesters, buffoons or actors, exhibit some ribald scene: the more their language was indecent and keenly directed against the English, the more applause it received from those present, particularly from the Sultaun, who encouraged them by words and promises of liberal reward; while shouts of laughter would resound through the hall at any successful sally or witty allusion.

The moments were, however, precious; and when the Sultaun observed that the hall was full, the dancers and jesters were dismissed, and silence commanded. The order was obeyed, and all looked with impatience to hear the real result of their monarch's deliberation in regard to the matter of peace or war, which had so long appeared to be doubtful. For awhile he appeared to meditate: then, partly raising himself up, he selected a small paper

from among the heap before him, and, ere he read it, spoke to those immediately around him.

"We, whose government is the gift of Alla," he said, "desire no concealment in our affairs; therefore listen, O ye faithful, and my friends—we are about to read you a revelation which was vouchsafed to us last night, and which on awaking we recorded; it hath since pleased the author of power to afford our mind a clue to the unravelment of the mystery, and this too we will unfold to you. As we lay asleep, soon after midnight, we thought we stood on the shore of the sea, and afar off sailed many great and powerful ships which bore the colours of the English. As we looked, behold a little cloud arose, and soon there was a mighty wind, before which all was scattered, and those who were on the sea-shore awaiting their arrival returned to their homes dejected and dispirited. These were the kafir Feringhees (may their graves be unblessed!)—they are helpless now; and, by the favour of the Prophet, as they have provoked a war by their own imprudence and bad faith, they shall find that the men of Islam are ready and willing to fight for their faith."

"We are ready! we are ready!" cried the assembly with one voice; "lead us to battle! we are your children—we will fight with you to the death."

"Listen further," he continued; "there was yet another vision more wonderful than the last vouchsafed to us, which proves that all those Moosulmans who fight against us in the armies of the English become hogs when they are stricken with death."

"They deserve it—they are faithless and treacherous—they sin against the holy Prophet (may his grave have rest!)—so may their ends be perdition and unholy!" shouted many of those who listened, while the rest cried, "A miracle! a miracle! that such revelations should be made to our Father and our Sultaun!"

"But that was not all," continued Tippoo; "for, to prove his words, the angel withdrew a film from before mine eyes, and I beheld a most extraordinary spectacle—one which filled me with amazement: before me stood a man with a hog's head, who, when he saw me, advanced to meet me. 'Who art thou?' I said. 'I am one of the true faith of Islam,' he cried, 'but I no longer desire to be called one, for I fought

against it under the banners of the infidels, and now I suffer for my indiscretion and faithlessness. I am, as you see, a hog; and these men have all been transformed into hogs; they also were killed in the various engagements with the kafirs; we are in the dreary land of spirits, and thine is permitted to hold communion with ours here, in order that the glory of the Faith may be upheld, and the terror of our example made known among thine armies.'

"Then methought all became dark and dreary, and a cold wind blew, and before us were shadowy objects which the eye could not determine at first; but as we looked upon the scene, dim forms were seen advancing towards us in lines, even like unto regiments, and the spirit which had spoken to us began to manœuvre them after the manner of the English, with whose system it appeared to be acquainted. But, O my friends, as I looked, all had hogs' faces! and the words of him they obeyed sounded like grunts in our ears. Wherefore we beseech you to consider this thing, and whether it is better to live and die in a natural state—the beloved and chosen of Alla—or whether ye

would also be hogs, and wallow in the filth of your own abomination, like unto the Christians and those who serve them."

"Miracles! miracles!" shouted the assembly; "the Sultaun is the beloved of Alla! To him alone are now revealed visions and wonderful dreams! for him we will fight, and for the faith!"

"Ay, ye say right," cried Tippoo, "very wonderful are the manifestations of Alla to his servant; therefore we shall this day begin our march, for we have heard that the kafirs are below the passes: Inshalla! a few days will bring us up to them, and then we will see whether their pride and haughtiness cannot be humbled. Let us, therefore, join together and send these infidels to the regions of perdition; and if ye be crowned with victory, ye will be full of honour and renown, and become the envy of the world; while to those who fall, martyrs in the cause of Islam, hear what the Prophet (blessed be his name!) hath promised. 'They shall enter into pleasant places, where many rivers flow, and curious fountains send forth most murmuring streams, near which they shall repose themselves on soft beds,

adorned with gold and precious stones, under the shadow of the trees of Paradise, which shall continually yield all manner of delicious fruits. And they shall enjoy beautiful women, pure and clean, having black eyes and countenances always fresh and white as polished pearls, who shall love none but themselves, with whom they shall enjoy the perpetual pleasures of love, and solace themselves in their company with amorous delights to all eternity; drinking with them most delicious liquors without ever being overcharged by them, which shall be administered by beautiful boys, who shall be continually running round their beds to serve them up to them in cups of gold and glasses fixed on diamonds.' "

"We will follow the good path!" cried hundreds, with flashing eyes and fierce gestures; "show us the infidels, and we will fall on them and annihilate them for ever!"

"Bismilla, so be it!" returned the Sultaun; "every man to his post! pay shall be issued to all, and tomorrow we shall advance. The planets are in a fortunate conjunction, and the kafirs shall tremble once more at our terrible war-cry of Alla Yar

CHAPTER VI.

"Nay, cheer thee, beloved! thou must be now as thou wert ever wont to be, stout of heart and fearless for the future," said Rhyman Khan to his fair wife, as, on the evening of that day, he sat with her in their quiet secluded apartments, with the moon's broad light playing on the slightly agitated fountain before them, and the cool wind rustling amidst the leaves above their heads. "Thou must not fear; what is there to dread? Hast thou not thine own nurse with thee, and my household, who are devoted to thee? hast thou not these apartments, where no one dares to intrude without thine especial leave, and a guard of my most faithful men around thee? why shouldst thou fear?"

"My lord," she said, looking up to him—and

it was hard to resist those pleading eyes—"I know I am not worthy to share the fate of one who is honoured in the councils of the Sultaun, and who is respected in the assemblies of the great; yet, if thou art ill, who will tend thee like Ameena? if thou art wounded, who will soothe thy pain? Thou wouldst have no one to cheer thy dulness; even the Patél would fail thee—thou wouldst think of Ameena!"

"But the English, fairest—men affect to despise them, but the Sultaun well knows their power, though he denies it to all, and scoffs at it (I pray Alla, he may feel it not soon) 'tis the English I dread for thee. Fighting with them is not like fighting with the infidel Hindoos, who are slaughtered like sheep, but the war of men against men—the shock of contending armies—the roar of artillery—the rattle of musketry; this thy gentle heart cannot bear."

"Bid me go before thee into the battle—bid me attend thee as thy servant—bind a turban on my brow and a sword to my waist, and see if Ameena will not follow thee to the death," she cried, hastily rising. "If the Mahratta women have done this many a time, thinkest thou that

a Moghul of the old and proud blood of Delhi dares not?"

A sudden cry of admiration broke from the Khan. She had arisen from her seat and advanced towards him; her always soft and loving eye was filled with a daring and flashing light; her bosom heaved, and her slight and beautiful form was drawn up to its full height, as she stood almost panting, when she ceased to speak.

"By Alla and the Prophet thou art fit to be a soldier's wife!" he cried, starting to his feet; "one who feels so keenly a soldier's honour and his fame, ought to share it with him. I had not thought that this spirit dwelt within thee. Come to me girl — henceforth thou needst not fear; come evil or good, thou shalt share it with Rhyman Khan. I swear by thine eyes I will not leave thee; art thou content now?"

"Thou art too kind!" she murmured, as she bowed her head upon his shoulder; "thou knowest I have none here but thyself, and my home is afar off; thou art father, mother, husband—all to me. I bless thee that thou hast heard my prayer, and that I am not to be left

tormented by a thousand fears for thee, and dreads (may they be visionary!) of coming evil."

"Of evil, Ameena?"

"Ay, my lord; hast thou not felt often upon the eve of some event in thy life, when, as yet, it had not burst from the womb of futurity, an unknown, undefinable sense of dread which pervaded thy senses, causing thought to be painfully acute, and to run into a thousand channels too intricate to follow for a moment, till it was lost in vague oppressive conjecture leading to no end?"

"Never, Ameena; I have never troubled myself to think much, but have been content to take events as it pleased Alla to send them."

"I may be wrong, then," she returned; "these may be the offsprings of my own imagination only, and not common to others. It is well it is so, they are not enviable."

"There will be danger, Ameena," said the Khan, who misapprehended her; "bethink thee again upon going with me into the rough camp; remember, Kasim Ali will be here, and will protect thee as he hath done before."

"Oh no! no! I would not stay—I would not stay with him, but go with thee, my noble lord," she said, averting her burning face from him; "for the sake of the Prophet do not mention that again; thou hast already said thou wouldst let me accompany thee."

"Bismilla! then be it so; yet why turnest thou away? art thou angry that I doubted thy firmness? I never doubted that, girl, since the night when we looked from the tower upon the burning village and those fierce Mahrattas; dost thou remember them?"

Alas! she remembered but too well; and even then the temptation had arisen within her to remain where Kasim Ali was, to be left under his care; but she had put it back with a struggle, and the Khan's doubt of her bravery had rallied her spirit, and with it her best feelings had come to her aid.

"I remember, Khan," she said carelessly; "but I would now prepare the few things I shall require, and warn Meeran to accompany me."

"Go then; I had told the Patél he would have to look after thee, and, strange enough, he thought thou wouldst be better with me as he

was not to go. Perhaps he may be in the Dewan Khana, I will go there and seek him."

Ameena was left alone; how strange it was, she thought, that Kasim should have advised what she herself had suggested; perhaps his dread had been the same as hers, and the very idea brought painful blushes to her face, and led her into a reverie which well nigh upset her resolutions; it would be so easy to change her determination, to confess her fears, to have him near her, to rely on him in all dangers; this would be happiness. But Ameena's virtue was strong, far stronger than her servant's, who at first almost reproached her for the voluntary loss of the opportunity, which, as she said, destiny had presented. Meeran's sophistry was unable, however, to contend with the honest purpose of her youthful mistress, and she at length, but not without some difficulty, yielded to her whim, of which she protested she would be tired enough when the English cannon roared in her ears, and the balls whizzed through the camp.

Ameena might not, perhaps, have held out

long against the combined effects of her own inclination and the terrible stories her nurse told her of the furious English; but there was little time for discussion—they were to move on the morrow; preparations for absence, though small, had to be made that night, and long ere noon the following day the army had left the city, for a longer absence than was at first contemplated.

But it is beyond our province to follow with the minuteness essential to history every event connected with the campaign, and we assume to ourselves, upon the precedents of many veterans who have toiled before us in the field of literary pursuit, the right of slightly sketching those details of historial occurrence, which, however necessary to the historian, can be omitted, or merely glanced at, in a tale of the present character.

The Sultaun, at the head of his noble army, proceeded down the Guzulhuttee pass, the one in the angle formed where the grand range of the Nilgherries joins the table-land of Mysore, and where a tributary of the Bhowanee pours its rapid waters into the plain. On their right,

as we have described when we took Herbert Compton to his lonely prison on the Nilgherries, rose their vast and blue chain, stretching far away into the distance; on the left, the wide plain, and the table-land breaking away into it in a series of giant ravines and gloomy depths. But for these the monarch had no eyes: a gloomy presentiment of evil appeared to possess him, and the constant succession of messengers with bad tidings, of the news of fall after fall of strong holds, forts, towns, and whole districts before the slight force of the English, inspired him with a dread which the confidence of the officers around him could not restore. Still if he could strike a decisive blow, he thought all would yet be well; and the fame and terror of the lion of Mysore, once more spread through the country, and reaching the ears of the English and their confederates the Nizam and the Mahrattas, would divert them from their alliance or convert them into positive friends.

The Bhowanee was full, but the army crossed in basket-boats, and, in the action which followed, met their enemies in such force and spirit, that the issue of the conflict compel-

led the English commander to draw off his force during the night, and to retreat, in the hope of effecting a junction with the commander-in-chief, whose force was daily expected. His movement was aided, as if providentially, by a violent rain, which, falling in the Sultaun's camp, caused confusion not easily to be remedied in the morning, when the escape of the English was known.

Frantic with rage Tippoo ordered an immediate pursuit, which, though gallantly performed by his troops, was ineffectual, as well from the nature of the ground, and the protection afforded to the English by the thick prickly pear-hedges, as from the resolute determination and patience with which it was met. At the small village of Shawoor the English commander determined to make a stand, for his men were worn out by fatigue and excitement; and this place—where as memorable a display of obstinate British valour against overwhelming odds as took place at Korygaum or Seetabuldee might have occurred, was not fated to be so distinguished. A false rumour arose of the advance of the main body of the army under Meadows, which, while it gave new energy to the English, inspired the

Sultaun with dread; a vigorous charge by the English cavalry determined the day and the campaign; and the Sultaun, dispirited by this and by the death of a favourite and gallant officer of rank, drew off his troops; he could not be persuaded to resume the attack, but retreated southwards towards Errode on the river Cavery.

Meanwhile the two English armies had united, and now advanced upon the Sultaun, who again retreated towards Coimbatoor; but imagining danger in that quarter, he turned again northwards, and falling upon the town of Darapoor, in which were some English sick and details, he captured it, and exacted a fearful revenge for his defeats and vexation. From hence, hearing of the advance of the English in the direction of Salem, and knowing the passes into Mysore in that direction to be easy and unguarded—in fact, only a series of undulations—he hurried thither, accompanied by all his cavalry, leaving a large body of his best infantry to hold the English in check, and, if necessary, to occupy the high and rugged passes that led directly to the capital.

The English armies were in possession of the country around the Tapoor pass, which leads from the fine town of Salem and further to the south from Trichinopoly into Mysore; and it was evident to the Sultaun that their territories to the south must be inefficiently protected, considering the large amount of force which had been dispatched for the invasion of his dominions. His whole mind was now bent upon striking a blow in the rear of the advanced force, which should turn their attention from their meditated object to the defence of positions and districts: by this means time would be wasted, and the season for active operation pass away. Acting therefore upon this suggestion, he dexterously avoided the English army, though passing within sight of it; and leaving the magnificent range of the Shevaroy mountains to the left, he took the direct road through the beautiful valley in which Salem is situated to Trichinopoly. It was on the noble temple of Seringham that his fury first fell; and by the desecration of its sacred images, the plunder and forcible conversion of its priests, and the uncontrolled licence given to his bigoted soldiery to mutilate

and destroy, a spirit of revenge was actively aroused against him in the minds of his Hindoo adherents, which had long been excited by his acts of horrible oppression and cruelty to their unhappy brethren the Nairs.

From Seringham ruin and devastation was mercilessly carried through Coromandel: each man had licence to plunder as he listed, and neither youth nor age was spared; the savage Pindharees of later years were not more destructive than the army of Islam, led on by its champion; and, although repulsed from the fort of Tiagar by a mere handful of British soldiers, yet that of Trinomallee was less fortunate in its defence, and on its unhappy garrison and inhabitants were vented in cruelties and tortures all the spleen that mortified vanity and ill success could prompt.

Tippoo had hoped too to arouse the ancient animosity of the French against the English, and to have involved them in the war; but his overtures for assistance were rejected or evaded by the Governor of Pondicherry, and his negotiations for an embassy to the court of Louis XVI. met with no encouragement. Foiled in

these attempts, he renewed his correspondence with many English officers, in the same hollow strain of attempted complaint and wonder at the commencement of hostilities that had before proved unsuccessful. But he had more able diplomatists and more wary commanders to deal with now than formerly; and having been unable to put into execution his threat of burning Madras, he abandoned the design, and hurried to meet the storm which now threatened to burst forth from the Nizam and the Mahrattas on the north, and from the English on the east; for Lord Cornwallis was already at Vellore, and the army assembled there were prepared to advance. But the Sultaun, although the force with him used the most strenuous exertions, failed to arrive in time to occupy the passes, and the English ascended to the table-land of Mysore without opposition.

During the period of our tale hitherto, the Sultaun had been separated from the ladies of his Harem, which had remained in Bangalore, nor had he held much communication with them for some years. The places of his lawful wives were supplied from time to time as caprice

willed the change, by numbers—some rudely torn from their families by his agents—others captives taken from among the Nairs and Hindoos of the coast, where his excesses had been most dreadful, to remain in favour for awhile, and to be flung aside when their novelty palled upon his senses. But the mother of his children and his own mother remained dear to him —dear as any could be to one of so cold and heartless a temperament, which warmed only at the trumpet-call of bigotry, and felt none of those endearments common to men of all ranks in the intercourse of their families. His anxiety was excited upon their account from the near approach of the English, which he was unable to check, though he several times attempted it by distant cannonades and threatening displays of large bodies of cavalry. It was therefore absolutely necessary that they should be removed; and having sent orders for them to prepare, the next day, at the head of his whole army he escorted them from the fort to his encampment, and preparation was made for sending the Harem on to the capital.

But while these stirring events proceeded in

the camp, and men's minds were gradually filled with alarm at the progress of the English and the formidable nature of their attack, events had occurred at the city which demand that we should notice them.

The army had left some days, and all was quiet within the fort, which but a short time before had resounded with the continuous beating of the Sultaun's kettle-drums, the exercise of the soldiery, and the bustle of the thousands attendant upon the Sultaun. But the work of the arsenals and foundries continued in full vigour, and it was plain to see that if the worst was feared, there was at least preparation made to meet it. In the midst of this, however, with which he had no concern, Kasim Ali, formed for the active occupation of the camp, led a life of inaction, from which he saw no hope of release until he should once more resume his post near the Sultaun, and lead into battle against the English his own gallant fellows, who had often sworn to follow him to the death.

There was one, however, to whom his every movement was an object of intense interest, and

who, tormented by a thousand contending passions, now vowed revenge against him because her suit had been rejected, now implored her attendant again and again to go to him. But after her first refusal, Sozun had no mind to encounter the stern looks of the young Patél, and as often as she was sent she would return with a lie that he had repulsed her.

It was night—quite dark, for the heavens were overcast with thick clouds, and the wind sighed and moaned within the trees above the Khan's dwelling; every now and then a gust would whistle round the apartment where the lady Kummoo sat, shaking the latticed windows and shutters which were carefully closed. She was alone with Sozun, and the theme had long been Kasim Ali and her wild ungovernable passion for him.

"I tell thee I will bear this no longer, Sozun," she said, as she arose, and opening the shutter looked forth. "The night is dark—it is fit for the venture; no one will see us, or if they do, we shall not be known."

"Holy Alla!" exclaimed the woman, "thou wilt not go to him, Khanum?"

"Ay will I, Sozun; my heart burns, my soul

is on fire; can I bear this for weeks and months? am I a stone? I tell thee nay, but a daring, loving woman, whose thoughts, night and day, are fixed on one object; it is now within my grasp, and the moment urges. Come, I am ready; take thy sheet and wrap thyself—thou knowest the way."

"It is in vain for thee to go, Khanum; wilt thou eat shame? hast thou no pride?—a woman to seek him who spurns her love!"

"Peace, fool! he has not seen me yet. Come, and delay no longer, I command thee; the way is short, and methinks I am already in his embrace. Quick! see I am ready."

"If thy absence should be discovered, lady?"

"I care not; I will say boldly I go to my mother; come, why dost thou delay?"

Sozun knew her mistress's character too well to dare a refusal, and she wrapped herself closely and preceded her. As they descended the stairs they met a servant. "I go to my mother's for awhile—let no one follow me," said the lady, and passed on. In a few moments they had quitted the house and were in the open street.

"Lend me thine arm, Sozun," said the lady

in a whisper: "I tremble much, and the night is dark, very dark; I did not think it would be so fearful. Alla! how the clouds scurry along the heavens, and how the wind moans and sighs."

"We had better return, Khanum."

"No, no, not for worlds! I must see him;—quick! give me thine arm and lead on."

Hastily traversing a few streets, Sozun stopped at a small door in a wall. "This is the place," she whispered; and as she said it, she felt the arm within hers shake as if with ague.

"For the sake of the Prophet, let us turn back—it is not too late—I have not knocked—thou art not fit to meet him," said the woman in broken sentences.

"Peace, fool! in a few moments I shall see him; dare I not this? Knock, and say he expects us."

Thou art a bold woman, thought Sozun, and she knocked loudly. The door was opened instantly; two men stood within.

"We are expected," said Sozun, in a disguised voice, without waiting to be questioned, and they proceeded.

"The Patél hath good company," said one fellow.

"I marvel at this," said the other; "I have served him long, and have never known the like of this before."

The women lost the rest as they passed hastily on. Kummoo's knees could hardly support her, but she followed Sozun mechanically, her heart beating violently, and her thoughts striving to arrange a few sentences for the interview; vain effort! they rose one upon another in wild confusion, defying retention.

Sozun knew the way; she entered the open verandah and looked through the door into the next apartment; Kasim was there, reading, as she had first seen him. "That is he," she whispered gently; "enter!"

Kummoo was a bold and daring woman, but now her heart almost failed her—for a moment only however—and she entered, and stood before him.

"Who art thou?" he cried; "and who has dared to admit thee?"

She could not reply; a few broken words escaped her; and unable any longer to stand

or to control herself, she fell at his feet, and clasping his knees sobbed aloud.

"Thou art fair—very beautiful," he said, as he raised her up and gazed upon her features, for her veil had fallen; "who art thou?"

"One who has loved thee long; I saw thee once—I have lived upon thy look," she said confusedly.

"Thou art not a tuwaif, thy speech is not like theirs."

"I am not."

"Thou art a wife, then, or thou wouldst not wear that ring?"

"Why should I tell a lie?—I am; my lord is old—he is absent—he loves me not—he has neglected and thrown me aside for another. I have seen thee, O Patél, and my liver is become water; I have come to thee—pity me and love me, as I would love thee!"

Kasim was sorely tempted; her beauty, her large lustrous eyes sparkling with passion, shone upon him; she hung on him; her hand, as it touched his, was hot and trembling. He raised her up and caressed her, and she threw herself upon his broad chest and again sobbed—it was with passion.

Then, even then, a thought flashed into his mind, quicker than light; could she be the Khan's wife; could he be the man, old, absent, who had flung her aside for another; his heart felt as though it made a mighty bound within his bosom. "Tell me," he cried, "by your soul—say, for my mind misgives me—tell me, art thou not the wife of Rhyman Khan?"

She could not reply—she burned—her mouth became parched and her eyes swam.

"Speak," he cried, "for the sake of Alla!" But no reply came; confusion was evident on her countenance; as he held her from him, suddenly her head drooped, and her form relaxed within his grasp; had he not supported her she would have fallen; for the sense of sudden detection had overpowered her already too excited feelings, and she had fainted.

"Holy Prophet, what is to be done?—she is insensible," exclaimed Kasim aloud; he was heard by Sozun, who entered.

"Tell me, by your soul, if she is the Khan's wife," he cried in agitation not to be repressed.

"What matter if she is, Patél? she loves you, your destiny is bright; shall I retire?"

"It is as I thought then. Holy Alla! I

bless thee that this was spared me! See, she is recovering; yonder is water—take her hence speedily, her secret will die with me; assure her of this, and tell her the Khan is my friend and benefactor." And so saying, he opened a small door and disappeared.

"He is gone," said Sozun, as her lady recovered and looked wildly around her: it was enough. They did not wait more than a few minutes; then Kummoo returned to her distasteful home, filled with rage and shame, and burning for revenge.

CHAPTER VII.

Months had passed, and Herbert Compton remained in the lonely fastness to which he had been doomed. He had no hope of release—none of escape. As he looked forth over the vast plain beneath his feet, he could see the interminable forests spread out before him, through which he well knew there was no path, or, if any, one known to the inhabitants only of the hills—intricate, and utterly unattainable by himself. The Fort itself occupied a round knoll on the very verge of the range, and jutted out, a bold promontory, into the plain, forming evidently one of the extreme angles of the chain of mountains upon which he was; its sides were dizzy precipices of five thousand feet almost

perpendicular to the bottom, where they rested amidst forests, the waving even of which could not be seen from the top. Looking eastward was the plain of Coimbatoor, stretching away to a dim horizon, where, at the distance of a hundred miles, were seen the rocky ranges of the Barah Mahal hills, broken at first, but gradually appearing to unite and form a continuous chain away to the left, till, increasing in height in the immense circle, they joined the huge mass on part of which stood his prison.

Through this the Bhowanee, the Baraudee, and several other streams which escaped from the mountains, wound their silent course, glistening in the bright sun like silver threads, away to the broader Cavery, a faint glimmer of which might now and then be seen, as the early rays of the morning sun shone upon the plain. Away to the south and west the mountains recommenced with the triangular peak of Dindigul, which could sometimes be seen, and continued, range over range, of every form, of every hue with which a brilliant sun, acting upon a dry, a damp, or a hot atmosphere, could clothe them—hues of sombre grey, of violet, of brilliant purple, till in the nearer

range of the Animallee hills they assumed more positive colours and forms.

To the west lay the broad valley, filled with wood, the only road to the sea; and thence Herbert's sad thoughts often wandered in vivid remembrance of the past, to the land where those most dear to him on earth mourned him as dead. He could not think that they could retain any hope that he lived; years had fled since they had heard of him, and he was become to them as one in the grave; one for whom—when any trivial incident, a word, a look, a tone, recalls the dead to present association—regrets, mingled with hopes for the future, are the spontaneous expressions of undying affections, and a tear is silently dropped, the overflow of some heart which clings to the memory of the dead with fondness which even time does not impair.

To the north and west Herbert looked across the tremendous chasm through which the military road now winds its gradual and easy ascent up to Coonoor, upon the verdant and sunny hills beyond. It was clothed with wood here and there, as though planted with the most consummate taste, occupying now

the side, now the gorge of a tiny valley, through which a small stream leaped from rock to rock, till, joining some larger one, it dashed down the precipitous sides of the chasm, into the foaming stream of the Baraudee, the roar of which sometimes reached his ear. At times he could distinguish noble herds of elk browsing upon the smooth verdant sides of the declivities, and would watch their motions for hours with curious interest; or huge herds of buffalos, tended by a few herdsmen, who appeared to be the only inhabitants of those lovely regions, where the cool climate of his beloved country was joined to the brightness and radiance of an eastern sun.

But though he lived amidst the most exquisite scenery that it is possible to conceive, it was but a poor compensation for liberty; true, under the rigour of a burning climate, captivity would have been more difficult and painful of endurance than here, where he might almost fancy himself in his own land; and could he have enjoyed the happiness of wandering about as he listed over those beauteous hills, through the valleys and beside their bounding streams,

it would have sufficed to him to have thus dreamed away his existence. Poor Herbert! his guards might have set him free; for escape from those mountains, through untrodden and pestilential jungles, into a country where death would await him if he were discovered, was guarantee enough that he would have remained; but they were answerable for him with their lives, and every kindness consistent with his safety was shown him; and though their food was coarse barley bread, rice, and the flesh of elk or wild hog, or jungle game,—yet his health and strength seemed to increase, and he had never felt greater vigour.

There were often changes in the little garrison: new comers brought such spices and condiments as were needed, and among them at last arrived one who spoke a few words of Hindoostanee. That he should be able to speak intelligibly with any one was a subject of inexpressible delight to Herbert; but soon a new hope sprung up in his heart, which though slowly admitted, yet was, or might be, practicable — escape. Without a guide it was a useless risk of life to attempt it; with one who knew the country and

the roads, either to the coast or to Madras, it was a matter, he thought, of difficult but not impossible attainment. Long he watched his opportunity to converse with his friend, for the man he thought was civil and obliging beyond his fellows; but he was evidently afraid to speak before them, lest he should at once be suspected and dismissed; but the time came at length.

Herbert, as was his wont, lay upon the green sward on the highest point of the Fort, basking in the warm sun, watching the shadows which chased each other over the beauteous and many-hued plain—now sailing over what appeared endless forests—now dimming the sparkle of the Bhowanee for a moment, which again glittered brightly as the shade passed away: again they appeared to creep up the face of some precipitous hill, or hang among its woods, while the sunlight toyed with the green slopes and mossy banks. Sometimes he speculated idly upon the scene below, and tried to make out the forms of villages among the groves which everywhere appeared amidst the cultivated parts. All was quite still, and not even a

leaf rustled to disturb the silence; only the drowsy hum of a bee was heard now and then, as one flew by to its nest under a precipice, laden with sweets. Suddenly, as he listened, he thought he heard the roll of musketry: it was very faint, but it came to a soldier's ear with distinctness enough to be heard. He started to his feet, and listened with painful eagerness, while his eye travelled in the direction of the sound. His whole action was so sudden, and his attitude so wrapt, that his attendant, who had been basking beside him, was thrown completely off his guard.

"What dost thou hear, Sahib?" he said eagerly in Hindostanee. "What dost thou see?"

"Hush!" cried Herbert; "listen! there was a gun, and then musketry; hark—a gun again! What can that mean?"

"Alla knows!" said the man; "but it is even so. Look! was that smoke? By Alla, it is; at Coimbatoor too—thou canst see the minarets of the mosque gleaming brightly."

"Thou speakest well in thy new tongue," said Herbert. "Why hast thou not spoken to me before?"

"I dared not: even now do not, for the sake of your faith and mine, venture by word or sign to speak to me before the others, or it may cost me my life."

"I will be discreet, and risk nothing; where are they?"

"Some are hunting, some are at the house. Enough—listen!" The sound came again. "Dost thou not see the smoke?" inquired he.

"No, I see none," said Herbert, straining his eyes.

"The Sultaun must be there, and they are firing," said the man. "It is wonderful that sound should come thus far."

For some time they continued to hear it; for Ahmed, Herbert's acquaintance, called his associates, and they all listened and speculated, but could come to no conclusion; and then the wind arose, and they heard no more. But they were evidently perplexed, and continued to speak of it during the evening. At last one went out, and returned with an expression of wonder upon his countenance: he spoke to his companions, and some got up and followed

him. Soon these sent for the rest, and they took Herbert with them.

It was quite dark. Near them a few objects were distinguishable when the eye became accustomed to the darkness, but overhead the sky was quite overcast and black; and though there was no wind, yet the cold air of night was chill and piercing at that height. They advanced to the place where they had been in the morning; it was within a stone's throw of the brink of the precipice, which descended full four thousand feet before it met even any of the projecting buttresses which appeared to support the mighty fabric. With difficulty they could see to the edge; beyond that, all was black—a vast void, into the depths of which the eye strove to penetrate, as the mind into illimitable space and eternity, and felt as if it were thrust back and checked for its presumption by the awful profundity. It seemed to Herbert as though the ground they trod had no support, and was sinking into the gloomy abyss. There seemed to be no horizon, no sky. Instinctively the group closed together, and seemingly awe-stricken spoke hardly above their breath.

"We saw it awhile ago," said one to another of those who had just arrived with Herbert.

"What did ye see?"

"Lights,—sparks in that black darkness. Look carefully, ye may see them again."

"There! there!" cried several. "Look! what can they be?"

Herbert saw where they pointed; in the direction where he had heard the firing in the morning, and in the middle of the void before him, for an instant or two were several bright flashes; he rubbed his eyes, which ached from gazing, and from the effect even of those transient flashes. Again he looked and listened; there was no sound except the sigh of the night breeze in a tree near him; but again there were flashes in the same place. And now, while they gazed, a light arose, soared in a little circle into the air, and descended. Another and another. Herbert knew what they were, and his heart bounded within him with a quickness of pulsation it had not known for years. *If* they should be his countrymen!

His guards turned to one another, and spoke

rapidly among themselves with eager gestures. At last Ahmed addressed him.

"They bid me ask you," he said, "what this is; you Europeans know all things. Hath the sky such lights?"

"No, it is a siege," said Herbert, "and the lights are shells and cannon. Is the Sultaun at war?"

"I know not, but will ask." And Herbert heard the word Feringhee in the answer. He was sure that his countrymen were near, and his heart yearned to them.

"There have been rumours of war," said Ahmed, "and we heard that the English were in the Barah Mahal; but they cannot have got so far, for the Sultaun had marched in person with the whole of the army."

Herbert thought otherwise. He could imagine nothing but victory for the arms he had once borne, and for the cause in which he would gladly have died. After watching long they withdrew from the spot chilled and wearied, and all lay down to rest. But Herbert could not sleep; his thoughts were too engrossing for sleep.

Escape was now possible, and long he deliberated whether it was not practicable alone. On the south, east, and north sides of the Droog were huge precipices, as we have already mentioned; the only access to it was from the west, by which he had come. Even were he to escape from the Fort, could he venture to descend any of the passes to the plain? Narrow paths, which at the bottom branched out into endless ramifications, led he knew not whither through dense forests that extended for miles and miles, the abode of pestilence and of wild beasts innumerable. The thought was appalling; and the more he weighed the risk in his mind, the less chance did there appear of success. Could it be that Ahmed would assist him? the obstacle of language had been broken through; and no sooner did his busy thoughts suggest the idea, than his mind clung to it. Ahmed was poor, he could not refuse money, and he would offer him anything he chose to demand—thousands, for liberty! He waited till his watch came, and when all were asleep and breathing heavily, he called him by name in a loud whisper.

"Ahmed! Ahmed!"

He was dozing even on his watch, and did not hear at first. Herbert was in agony lest the others should awake.

Ahmed answered at last. "What dost thou require?" he said.

"Come here, I would speak to thee secretly." He arose, and crossed the hut; it was a good sign. He seated himself close to Herbert; perhaps he had too been thinking of the escape.

"Ahmed," said the young man, "thou hast been kind to me: I love thee, for thou hast spoken to me: thou art my friend. Wilt thou then aid me?"

"They say you English are deceitful and faithless," replied the man.

"They wrong us—by thy head, they wrong us. Our enemies alone say so; we are faithful even to death. Wilt thou trust one, and that one me?"

The man moved, but spoke not.

"Wilt thou aid me?" continued Herbert, for he perceived he was listened to. "Behold, I trust thee in thus speaking to thee, and am utterly in thy power; if it is thy will, thou canst

denounce me to thine associates even now. See how I trust thee—thou wilt not betray me. For years I have languished in captivity. I have a father, mother, brethren, sisters—one other, too, even dearer than they. They think me dead, and the old have long mourned with bitter grief, even the grief of parents for a first-born and beloved. Hast thou no heart for this to plead for me within thee?"

Again the man writhed, but spoke not.

"Hast thou no tenderness, that I may appeal to it? Hast thou no father—mother—wife—who, if thou wert dead, would mourn for thee, but who, living, rejoice for thee?"

"I have all," was the reply.

"I have not the last," said Herbert sadly, "that was a pang spared me. Yet there is one who in blighted hope, and crushed and withered affection, mourns me as long since numbered with the dead. Thou canst restore peace where there is sorrow, hope where there is despair."

"I cannot aid thee, Sahib."

"Thou canst! thou canst! My countrymen are yonder; I feel that they are,—they must

be victorious, else they had not penetrated so far. Guide me to them, and thou wilt earn my gratitude, and with it a competence for life. Thou knowest the passes; to me the attempt unaided would be death."

"It would indeed: alone I would not attempt them for a kingdom, even with my knowledge; but I feel for thee, Feringhee; thy looks are gentle, thy speech is soft; thou art not as I have been told the English are: I will believe thou art to be trusted."

"Oh believe it, believe it, Ahmed! my life will be in thy hands; thou canst guide me to liberty or to death; I am ready to trust thee. Can I say more?"

"Enough, Sahib; I rely upon thee. I swear by Alla and the Prophet to guide thee safely to Coimbatoor—if it be true that thy countrymen are there: further than that, if they are not there, I should but lead thee into death and fall a sacrifice myself. But listen, I risk much; my parents live—they love me: I have too a wife and a child—they are dependent upon me. If we are detected, the vengeance of the Sultaun will fall on them, and

that is fearful. Thou seest I have an equal risk with thyself;—now wilt thou trust *me*?"

"Thou hast, brave fellow! and I estimate thy generosity as that of a brother; but we have spoken of no reward."

"Nor will I," said the man; "you are noble; your words—your appearance, even in those rags, is noble. I trust to you."

"Gallant fellow! thy confidence shall be well repaid. If I live, thou shalt know no poverty, but wealth to the end of thy life, and honourable service, if thou choosest it. But enough—when shall we make the attempt?"

"The relief is expected tomorrow, or the day after; the men will bring us news, and upon that we will arrange all."

By evening the next day the expected relief came. The news was true: the English besieged Coimbatoor, but with indifferent success; it was said that the Sultaun was out, and victorious even to the gates of Madras; the men were exulting over the discomfiture of the English.

"Darest thou now attempt it?" asked Ahmed that evening; "the news of thy people is bad."

"I will, should I perish in the attempt."

"Then I will lead thee out tomorrow, on pretence of taking thee with me to hunt. I have already said thou shouldst have recreation, and they have agreed to allow it. Enough now; but gird up thy loins tightly and be ready, for we shall have far to go, and to tarry by the way is death."

The morrow dawned,—a cloudy and damp day; the mighty mists lay still in the hollows and ravines, obscuring everything. Ahmed was in despair. "Through those clouds," he said, "we can never penetrate, but should be lost among the precipices." Long before noon, however, the wind arose, and stirring the vast volumes of cloud from their repose, caused them to boil up from the abysses around them, and gradually to melt into air.

"Come!" said Ahmed to Herbert, whose heart bounded, and his eye sparkled, as he heard the summons! "Come, the men are about to return; we will see them a little way, and then turn off ourselves. Come! they are departing."

He obeyed eagerly, and soon the Fort was left behind; and the narrow neck which connects the place to the main body of the chain—an

awful precipice on each hand—was passed in safety. Soon they plunged deeper and deeper into the woods by a narrow path, descending till they reached one branch of the Baraudee, which, foaming and dashing amidst rocks, brawled on its way to the plain. Here they divided; the party ascending the green slope before them, and Herbert and his companion turning up the stream, apparently in search of game.

"Lie down! lie down!" cried Ahmed; "Shookur Alla! they are gone, and there is yet day enough for us. Ere evening we must be on the edge of the range, and the morrow will see us far below it. Canst thou bear fatigue?"

"Any: look at me—I am stronger than thou art."

The man regarded him earnestly, and read full well in the clear eye and open brow, ruddy cheek, and firmly knit frame, a defiance of danger. "I fear not for thee," he said; "Alla Akbar! the victory will be ours."

Awhile they lay concealed among the long fern, and then rising up, Ahmed looked carefully around him; the party was long out of

sight, and they proceeded with light hearts and buoyant steps.

Ahmed had not overrated his knowledge of the mountains; he led Herbert along the edge of the stream for awhile, and as they went along Herbert pulled wild flowers,—the flowers of his own England. Woodbine and wild rose, archis and wild hyacinth, and the graceful cyclamen, and fern and violets; and the more familiar butter-cup and wild anemone. "They know not that such a paradise exists in this land," he said, "and these shall be my tokens; even as the spies brought grapes and figs to the children of Israel in the desert."

Hardly now he heeded the lovely scenery that was around him everywhere, among which the round top of his old prison occupied a conspicuous place, clothed with wood to its very summit; and its precipitous sides rising out of the huge chasm that now lay between him and it, at the bottom of which roared the Baraudee, leaping from ledge to ledge in foam, in an endless succession of cataracts. Now and then they would catch glimpses of the blue plain beyond which

melted into the horizon; and the deep and gloomy ravine on their right hand presented an endless variety of views, of such exquisite beauty, that Herbert would often stop breathless to contemplate in admiration of their loveliness, for which his companion appeared to have no eyes.

They had now travelled for some hours, and the road had been a toilsome one, owing to the constantly recurring deep valleys which broke into the ravine we have mentioned.

It was now evening; the sun was sinking into the west amidst clouds of glory, and the huge shadows of the mountains were fast creeping over the plain. The precipices of Hulleekul droog shone like gold under the red light, which, resting upon the vast forests and hanging woods, caused them to glow with a thousand rich tints; and wherever a small oozing of water spread itself down a naked rock, it glittered so that the eye could hardly behold it.

"Art thou fatigued, Sahib?" asked Ahmed; "thou hast borne this well, and like a man. By Alla! I had thought thy race were as soft as women."

"No! I can endure yet a good hour," said Herbert gaily.

"'T is well! then we will push on. Why hast thou burthened thyself with those flowers? fling them away—thou wilt be the lighter."

"Not so, my friend; these are the flowers of my own land, and I take them to my comrades; thou dost not know—thou canst not feel how dearly such things are prized in a distant land—bringing with them, as they do, remembrances of past time, and of those who shared it. On with thee! behold I follow."

Hardly a mile further, on the very summit of the mountain, ere it declined into the plain, they reached a rock, beside which was a tiny footpath, hardly perceptible. "This is our resting place for the night," said Ahmed; "many a time have I slept here, with a load of tobacco on my shoulders for the mountaineers, who are a curious people."

"Ay, indeed!"

"Yes, I will tell thee all about them: but lay thyself down beneath this rock, and it will shelter thee from the cold wind. I will get some sticks, and we will have a fire; I should

like a smoke, too, after this travel." And so saying, he disencumbered himself of his arms, and turned off to a short distance.

Herbert lay for awhile looking out on the glorious prospect, in a sense of the most delicious security and enjoyment. What exquisite visions were floating before his eyes, as, shutting them, he allowed the ideas to crowd into his soul!—visions of home, of love, of Amy, of his parents! Suddenly, however, there was a loud roar, the crash of which seemed to paralyse his heart: it was followed by a scream so shrill and piercing, that he never forgot it to his dying day. Hastily snatching up the sword which lay before him, he drew it, and hurried to the spot from whence it had proceeded—but his brave guide was gone for ever!

CHAPTER VIII.

There are few on earth, who in the chequered track of their earthly pilgrimage—often cheered by the glowing beams of a sunny mind, often obscured by despondency, often hurried on by impatience and querulousness, and yearning with vain desire to penetrate the veil of the hidden future—who do not recal to memory some crisis when the happiness they sought has been apparently within their reach—when the hand, stretched forth to grasp the cup, has been dashed down by a rude but irresistible force, which taught them in that moment how vain was their power, how little their strivings to attain their end, when compared with the Providence which held it in disposal.

Providence, fate, destiny, chance—call it what we will—there is an over-ruling power, visible in the meanest events of our lives, which, if we follow it up to its source in our own hearts, cannot fail to impress us with awe—with a feeling of littleness, often mortifying, and hard for proud minds to bear,—a feeling that there is a power guiding, and often suddenly and rudely checking us, in the midst of a career which we have marked out for good—certainly for gratification—but which may not be accordant with the purposes of our being. Happy is the possessor of that temperament who even in the midst of disappointment—when a murmur at misfortune, blighted hope, prolonged sickness, or blasted ambition, rises to his lips—can say "It is for my good—it is the hand of Providence—I bow to its correction in humility."

But it was difficult for Herbert Compton to be reasonable under so bitter a disappointment; wild with excitement, he roamed hither and thither without fear, for in that moment he had no thought of danger. The poor fellow who had periled his all for him—the safety of his

parents, of his wife—who had so trusted him as to commit without hesitation his future destiny into his hands—whose last act was one of careful kindness and solicitude—was gone for ever! The happiness, the exquisite enjoyment of a meeting with his countrymen, which he had tasted in anticipation, had been dashed from his hand in one moment!

How often, while there was light, did he awake the echoes of the mountains with the name of Ahmed! He roamed everywhere, tried to track the animal who had carried off his poor friend by the trail of his body through the fern, and succeeded for a short distance, but lost it again irretrievably. He returned to the spot where they had first stopped; the whole was a hideous dream, which in vain he tried to shut out from his thoughts. Vain indeed was the effort! the tiger's roar and Ahmed's piercing scream rang in his ears, and often he would start, as he thought they were repeated, during the fearful hours which ensued. As the night closed, the wind arose, and with it clouds came up out of the west, filled with cold driving rain; the ledge he was under afforded but slight pro-

tection, and yet it sheltered him enough to allow of a smouldering fire, which after many efforts he kindled.

The storm increased; dark masses of clouds hurried past, apparently close to his head, and the blast groaned and whistled through the ravines and around the peaks and precipices. Of the mountains he could see nothing, for the same black darkness which had surrounded Hulleekuldroog the night before, now enveloped him; there was only the little light of the fire, as the leaves and dead fern blazed up at times under the effect of an eddy of wind, and then utter darkness fell again. Hour after hour passed in deliberation as to his future conduct. Dare he attempt the passage of those fearful jungles alone? encounter wild beasts, thread trackless forests, where there was no path, and which were filled with rank grass and reeds, thorny rattans, matted creepers, dank and noisome swamps, the abode of deadly pestilence? For the time he was free; but even if he gained the plain, did not a more terrible captivity await him perhaps in a hot and parching dungeon, where the fresh air and the beau-

teous face of nature would never be felt or seen? But he was not to be daunted; he thought he knew the direction,—his countrymen were before him, and the path was distinct enough he supposed for him to track it: this idea consoled him, and he fell a sleep for awhile, till the morning broke.

He awakened only to endure fresh disappointment; he was surrounded by dense mists, which, though sometimes they would partially clear away, filled the space before him so completely that he could see nought but a thick boiling mass, fearfully agitated by the wind, now rising up as though to overwhelm him, now sinking and displaying for an instant the bluff top of Hulleekuldroog or a part of its precipitous sides, or at an immeasurable and giddy depth the bottom of the chasm, with the Baraudee roaring and flashing among the darkness.

He was in despair, but he was calmer; even the utter hopelessness of attempting to proceed down a precipitous mountain-side into a trackless forest, enveloped in cloud, caused a revulsion of feeling, and a sense that there was an unseen but sensibly-felt protection af-

forded him—that the very obstacles in his path probably preserved him from following it on to destruction.

There was no other course left but to return —perhaps to captivity for suspicion might be aroused against him,—to a life of wearisome endurance, but still with beautiful nature for a companion, in whose ever-varying and glorious features there was ever something new to contemplate and to adore.

Ahmed's sword, shield, and matchlock lay on the ground: he took them with him, vowing they should never part from him; the latter was useless for defence, for the charge was wet, and the powder-horn and bullet-pouches had been around the waist of the dead. The flowers he had gathered too lay beside them: they were faded now—fitting types of his withered hope; that day he was to have rejoiced over them with his countrymen! Alas! when would such an event now come; the future was a dreary blank before him, where so lately all had been bright and sunny; and with a sad heart, but with feelings subdued from the excitement of the past evening, he began to retrace his steps. This was no easy task, for the rain, which had

cleared away for an hour or so after daylight, now began again to pour in torrents, and he was chilled to the heart. But the very difficulties before him caused him to summon all his energies to meet them, and he strove manfully and conquered. His worst suffering was faintness for want of food; for the cakes they had brought with them Ahmed had tied in a handerchief about his back, which he had not removed.

As the night set in gloomily and dark, Herbert Compton, well nigh exhausted by hunger, fatigue and cold, toiled up the steep and rugged path which led to the Fort from the stream below; and though often missing the way, which in the darkness caused by the thick wood over his head was almost undiscernible, he at last crossed the narrow neck already mentioned, and soon after saw the welcome lights of the garrison huts twinkling among the trees above him. This lent him fresh energy, and in a few minutes he arrived before them. Hungry, wet and cold, he did not consider for a moment the probably issue of his reception, and entered that habitation where he had used to reside.

There was a group sitting smoking around

a blazing fire, who started to their feet suddenly, as he thus unceremoniously presented himself; and after gazing earnestly at him for a moment, all simultaneously dashed towards him and seized him. Herbert did not struggle in their hands, nor could he answer the rapid and almost unintelligible inquiries for their missing companion which were poured forth in a torrent. In a few moments too they saw Ahmed's sword and shield, and their dark frowns and menacing looks were bent upon him, and the hand of more than one stole to the weapon by his side as if to inflict summary revenge on him who they might well suppose had destroyed their absent friend. Gradually, however, Herbert's calm and sorrowful manner impressed them with a sense of his innocence; and as they became more reasonable in their behaviour, he described as well as he was able, and mostly by signs, the event which had happened, and pointed in the direction of the place.

Sorrow was on all their faces, and many wept, for Ahmed had been a favourite among them; and while one of them set refreshment before the weary Herbert, the rest conversed in groups

upon the subject. Although he could understand but little of what passed, he could see that it was their intention to put his innocence to the proof, by conducting them to the spot where the event had happened. He was right: they allowed him to rest that night without molestation, but by daylight he was awakened, and he found the majority of the little garrison, twelve or fourteen men, equipped for the expedition, each with his match lighted; after a hasty meal they proceeded.

The morning was clear and fine, and the air fresh and bracing: the errand upon which he was going was a sad one to Herbert, and yet there was a melancholy satisfaction in finding perhaps the body of the unfortunate Ahmed, and at any rate the cheering excitement of vigorous exercise, in a rapid walk over the beautiful hills. There were no traces of the storm of the day before, except an increased freshness and odour of the wild flowers: here and there vast masses of white vapour were hanging softly upon the precipices of the Droog, or resting in the abysses at its foot. Herbert proceeded at a rapid pace before the rest.

There was evidently much surprise excited among them at the direction which he took, and many significant glances were exchanged from time to time; nor were these the less decided when they arrived at the rock and little footpath: several appeared at once to conclude that escape had been Ahmed's object, and they pointed significantly to the plain and to the path which led to it. Here was the place however, and having explained as well as he could their arrival, and Ahmed's intention of lighting a fire, Herbert led them to the long fern whither he had gone for materials for the purpose.

They were all armed, and every man blew his match, and looked carefully as he proceeded; it was evident now that they believed him. The chief among them was in advance; he was a capital shot, and Herbert had often seen him hit the smallest marks when they practised for their amusement at the Fort. The trail of the body was quickly found, and these expert hunters at once traced it, where Herbert could see no mark, much further than he had any idea the tiger would have gone. Here and there too, a bit of rag fluttered upon

a thorny bush, which was a plain indication that they were right.

At last, as they proceeded more and more carefully, a crow suddenly arose from among some tall fern with a hoarse and startling croak, and, hovering over the spot, aroused many others; some vultures and kites too flew up and wheeled around, screaming discordantly; and a jackal skulked off into a near thicket, evidently disturbed from his repast.

"He is there!" said the leader of the party in a low tone; and a hasty colloquy took place among them for a moment: all seemed brave fellows, and again they advanced without hesitation.

They had scarcely gone many steps when some torn apparel met their eye, and a few steps further, lying amongst the fern, were the mangled remains of their poor comrade; his features were all gone, but the powder-horn and bullet-pouches were around his waist, and to his back was fastened the handkerchief, which still contained the cakes he had tied up in it. With a passionate burst of grief most of them darted to the spot, and looked on the sad spec-

tacle—most sad to Herbert, who, overcome by bitter thoughts, gave full vent to emotions he did not seek to repress.

But they were not long inactive; a search for the tiger seemed determined on, and they proceeded in a body round and round the place. They had not gone far, however, when they heard a growl, a low harsh growl, which made the blood run cold in Herbert's veins; they stood for a moment, and it was repeated. It appeared close to them, and one fired in the direction. It was enough: with a roar which rent the air, the noble brute bounded forth from his lair of fern, his yellow-streaked sides shining in the bright sun: for an instant he regarded them with glaring eyes,—then turned and fled.

There was a precipice a little beyond: he stopped at the edge and looked over; it was evidently too high to leap, and as he hesitated on the brink one man fired;—the shot was well aimed. The tiger turned again, roared most fearfully, but immediately after staggered to the edge of the cliff; his hind quarters appeared paralyzed and fell over, but he still held on by his claws, though they slipped every moment. The

leader saw his opportunity, raised his gun and fired. Herbert heard the ball crash into the skull—saw the grim head quiver for a moment, the paws relax their hold, and the whole frame slip. All darted forward and looked over: it was a fearfully giddy place; the blue depth was filled with boiling mist—the tiger's body was descending rapidly, turning over and over; at last it hit a projection and bounded away, till the mist appeared to rise and hide it from their view.

"Enough!" cried the leader, "let us depart."

They returned to the dead; it was impossible to remove the remains, they were so mutilated; but they hastily dug a shallow place with their broad hunting-knives and laid them in it, covering the spot with thorns and large heavy stones. Then all lay down on the brow of the mountain and rested for awhile; and Herbert was glad when they set out on their return homewards, for the spot was filled with too many bitter regrets for the dead, and for the untoward accident that once more had thrown him back into captivity, which now appeared endless; for as they passed the rock and path-

way, they pointed to it and to the plain, and shook their heads—some laughing, others with frowns and threatening gestures, which told him plainly that to attempt to escape would be death. Henceforth his life became a blank.

* * * * * *

It was not long after Philip Dalton and his wife reached India with their companion young Hayward, that the aggressions of Tippoo Sultaun upon the Rajah of Travancore, and his known detention of prisoners since the peace of 1784, together with many insults upon the frontiers for which no satisfaction was ever obtained, determined Lord Cornwallis to declare war against him; and once this had been done in a formal manner, every nerve was strained by the Government of India to meet the exigency in a decisive and efficient manner.

It is foreign to our tale to describe every event of the war, which has already been so much more efficiently done in the histories of the period; besides we have a pleasant licence in such matters, without which it would be impossible for us to conduct our readers to any satisfactory conclusion of our history. We shall therefore

only state that, availing himself of the undefended state of the passes, and while the Sultaun was occupied with his fruitless negotiations with the French, Lord Cornwallis ascended into Mysore, and, ere he could be opposed by any force, had advanced considerably towards the strong fort of Bangalore. There were partial engagements for some days between the Mysore cavalry, led often by the Sultaun in person, and the English; but they were attended by no decisive result, and did not operate in any way to check the invasion.

Bangalore fell: the siege and the heroic defence of its brave governor are themes which are still sung in the country, and will never pass from the memory of its inhabitants while there remains one of its itinerant bards, who, with two brass wires stretched between two gourds at each end of a stick, perambulate the towns and villages for a scanty and hard-earned subsistence.

The Sultaun retreated upon his capital, and to capture that was the object of the campaign; but ere the army could advance, it was thought necessary to reduce some small forts in the

neighbourhood, and to throw into them garrisons of such Hindoo inhabitants of the country, who had welcomed the English invasion and already assisted it against the Sultaun, as would keep them from the occupation of the Sultaun's troops.

From his interest with the higher ranks of the army, and his talent and efficiency, Philip Dalton had, in the opening of the campaign, been appointed to the general staff of the army, while Charles Hayward remained with his regiment; they continued however together both inhabiting the same tent, and as their history was known to many, they were objects of peculiar interest. Indeed poor Herbert's fate was one in which the sympathies of all were powerfully excited, and many were the sincere aspirations that the issue of the war might restore him and others, both English and native, to sorrowing and desparing relatives.

The reduction of the small forts we have alluded to was a service of no great difficulty; and when the army lay encamped near Balapoor—one of them—while arrangements were

being made for its occupation, it was common for the officers to examine such places or objects of interest, as the neighbourhood of their camp afforded. Preeminent among these was the famous rock whence prisoners used to be flung, and of which mention has already been made as connected with Herbert Compton.

No one, whether European or native, could approach this spot, without feelings of horror; for the lonely rock stood alone in the plain; and the fearful use to which it had been devoted, both by Hyder and Tippoo, was fresh in the memory of all. A few in the force had seen and examined it, and Philip Dalton and Charles rode thither accompanied by a few mounted orderlies on the very first opportunity of leisure.

A silent feeling of sickening apprehension grew upon them as they approached it, and a thought would force itself upon Philip, despite of his hopes and prayers to the contrary, that Herbert's fate might have been the dreadful one experienced by the hundreds whose whitened bones and sculls lay around the foot of the

rock; but he did not mention this to his companion, and they rode on in silence. At length they reached the rock, and, leaving their horses below, ascended to the top, where still stood, though somewhat dilapidated, the small hut or house we have once mentioned. But this did not attract their notice at first; the fatal brink, which had witnessed the frantic death-struggles of so many, was the spot to which they were led by the orderlies, who had a hundred marvellous tales to tell of events that had happened there, and of the tremendous strength of those whose business it was to hurl the victims from the precipice. They looked over too, and saw the bones and sculls scattered at the bottom, and shreds of white calico and red cloth fluttering among the bushes—the sad evidence of the fate of brave soldiers who had perished there. There was nothing there to induce them to remain, and Philip and his young friend turned away sickened from the spot.

"And this is the place where the unfortunate persons were confined," said an orderly, who,

pushing open a rude and half-broken door ushered them into a mean and dilapidated apartment.

"Good God! it is covered with the names of poor fellows who have died here," exclaimed Philip; "what if *his* should be here? we must not leave an inch unexamined, Charles."

"Why, do you think he was ever here?" asked the young man in an agitated tone.

"God forbid! but it is our duty to look; we may possibly gain a clue."

And they fell to examining the walls with careful scutiny. It was a painful task; there were many names; the hands which had written them were now dry bones bleaching without, or had long ago mouldered into dust; many were the humble prayers written there, and obscene words and curses mingled with them in strange combination. Many a direction too for parents and wives and children of those who were dead, in case others might visit the spot, and bear them to the far west.

"Heavens!" exclaimed young Hayward suddenly: "Come here, Philip! quick!"

Dalton darted across the apartment, and Charles pointed to a small writing scratched in the plaster with a pin or nail; it was plain even to his swimming eyes and sickened heart.

"Herbert Compton.

"May 24, 17—. Many have been thrown from this abode of death; I have waited my turn; it will come tomorrow; it will deliver me from a life of misery and —"

There was no more—a stone flung against the wall had hit the rest and obliterated it.

Philip sank down and groaned aloud. That there should be such an end to his hopes, which this proved to have had foundation, was hard indeed to bear. Awhile Charles strove to comfort him, but both their hearts were sick, and they were poor comforters one to an other.

"There may be further trace of him," said Philip; "let us look around."

They did so. For awhile they found nothing, but at length a joyful cry again broke from Charles. "God be praised!" he said, "come here and read, Philip."

The writing on the wall was rough and mis-

shapen, but they were characters of blessed hope to both; the words was these:

"Captin Comtin was taking awey from this horible pleace verry ill, on the day of—

"John Simpson."

"God be praised for this!" exclaimed Philip, as he fell on his knees and blessed Him aloud; "there is yet hope, for assuredly he did not perish here, Charles."

CHAPTER IX

"These are too precious to remain here, Charles," said Philip; "we must remove them." It was easily done: with their penknives they carefully cut round the plaster of each inscription, and then separated it from the wall without difficulty; they were precious relics, and the young men long gazed on them, with that depth of feeling which such memorials were well calculated to excite. "Ah! Philip, if we could only trace him further," said Charles.

"We thought not of this when we came hither," he replied, "and we should be thankful; it is just possible that some one in the town may have heard tidings of him if he were really ill, and we will go thither and inquire."

They did not tarry on the rock for an instant; their horses awaited them at the bottom, and the distance between the rock and the small town being quickly traversed, they arrived in the bazaar. Philip directly made for the Chouree, where the former Kotwal and others sat engaged in their functions of superintending the market, and directing the issues of grain and forage to the followers of the British army.

They were received courteously by the functionary, who was all civility to his late conquerors: Philip at once opened the cause of his visit, and expressed his anxiety for intelligence, however vague, of his lost friend.

The Kotwal racked his brains, or appeared to do so; he could remember nothing about the rock or its victims, being fearful lest he should compromise himself by some unlucky remark or confession. "So many had perished there he said; it was the Sultaun's order, and in Balapoor they never knew anything about them."

"But was no one ever brought here?" asked Philip.

"Really he could not remember, so many went and came; how could he, the Kotwal, who saw a thousand new faces every day, retain a recollection of any? Prisoners too in hundreds passed by,—sometimes remaining there for a day, but he never saw them; he had no curiosity,—he had other business; he was in fact the Kotwal, upon whom rested all the affairs of the town."

Philip was in despair. "Can you get me no information?" he said; "I do not speak the native language, and to me inquiry is useless."

"Of course, if my lord wished it, he would make every inquiry," and in truth he began in earnest with those about him; none, however, could remember anything but vague descriptions of prisoners passing and repassing; and Philip, after a long and patient investigation which led to no result, was about to depart, disappointed and vexed, when a man entered who had been absent on some message; he was one of the labourers, or scouts of the village, and the Kotwal immediately said to Philip, "If any one can give you the information you seek, it is this man, for it was his business to

attend upon the Sultaun's people who came hither with prisoners."

He was immediately questioned, and gave ready answers; he perfectly remembered a Feringhee who was brought ill, and long remained at the Fakeer's Tukea*, beyond the town, lying upon the Chubootra†; they were told he was an officer, and an order came to him from the Sultaun himself, brought by Jaffar Sahib Jemadar.

"Surely, surely!" cried the Kotwal, whose memory appeared wonderfully refreshed; "'t is strange I should have forgotten him, seeing that he was often fed from my house; women you know, Sahib, have tender hearts, even for those of a different faith, and we knew nothing of the brave English then."

"Canst thou guide me to this Fakeer?" said Philip to the man, who could speak indifferent Hindostanee.

"Certainly," he replied; "'tis but a short distance." And so saying he took up his long staff. Philip rose to depart.

* Lit. Pillow, the abode of a Fakeer.

† Elevated seat or terrace.

"I will accompany you, sir," said the Kotwal; "the old Sein * is very curious in his behaviour to strangers, and may not be civil; besides he hath been ill of late."

"I thank you," returned Philip, "but I would prefer going alone. I have no doubt the old man will be reasonable, even to a Feringhee. Salaam!"

Guided by the scout, who ran before their horses, they were quickly at the garden we have before mentioned. It had been respected by all; the little mosque was as purely clean, the space around it as neatly swept as ever; the flowers bloomed around the tiny fountain, and the noble trees overshadowed all as closely as when, sick and exhausted, Herbert Compton lay beneath their shade, and blessed God that he had found such a refuge and such a friend as the old Fakeer.

The venerable old man sat in his usual spot under the tamarind-tree; before him was his Koran, which he read in a monotonous tone; his face was very thin, and he looked weak and attenuated by sickness.

* Respectful appellation of a Mahomedan Fakeer.

"Salaam, Baba!" said Philip advancing, "we are English officers, who would speak to thee."

"Salaam Aliekoom!" returned the old man benignantly, "ye are welcome; the turn of destiny hath allowed us to say that, to those whom we have called kafirs; but ye *are* welcome to the old Fakeer,—all are welcome who come in peace and good will. What seek ye?"

"Father," said Philip, much touched by the benevolence of his tone and appearance, "thou art no bigot, and wilt aid us if thou canst. I seek a lost friend, us as dear to me as a brother; I know not if it be the same, but I have heard that one of my race was tended by thee, and remained ill with thee for long; it may be he; didst thou know his name?"

"Holy Alla!" cried the old man eagerly, "art thou aught to him who loved me as a son?"

"Alas! I know not his name, father."

"His name! it was—" and he fell to musing, his fore finger between his teeth. "I cannot

remember it now," he said, "though it is daily on my lips. Ka— Ka—"

"Compton?" said Philip.

"The same! the same!" cried the old man; "the same—Compton—Captain Compton; the name is music to me, Sahib; I loved that youth, for he was gentle, and often told me of your cool and beautiful land in the distant west, where the sun goes down in glory, and he taught me to love the race I heard reviled and persecuted."

"Alla will reward thee!" said Philip; "but canst thou tell me anything respecting his fate?"

"Alas! nothing; for a month he was with me, ill, very ill,—we thought he would die; but the prayers of the old Fakeer were heard, and the medicines of his hand were blessed; and once more he spoke with reason and grew calm, and the fever left him; then, when his strength returned, an order from the Sultaun arrived, and it was a bold bad man that brought it, and he was taken away from me, and never since that have I gained any tidings of him. May his destiny have been good! my prayers

have been night and day for him to that being who is your God and mine."

Philip was much touched, and poured out his thanks to the old man most sincerely and with a full heart. "Alas! I fear all trace of him is lost," he said.

"Say not so, my son; I dread—but I hope. The Sultaun is not always cruel—he is just; his death was never intended—his life was too valuable for that; he is most likely at Seringapatam, whither ye are proceeding they say—I would not despair. And now listen: Alla hath sent thee hither—thou who wast his friend; he gave me a letter, a packet which he wrote here in secret; I would ere this have delivered it in thy camp, but I am grown very feeble and infirm of late, the effect of illness, and I could not walk so far—wilt thou receive it? to me it has been a memorial of the young man, and I have looked on it often, and remembered his beautiful features, and his gratitude when I risked this my little possession, which to me is a paradise, in taking it from him."

Eagerly, most eagerly Philip implored to see it, and the Fakeer rising attempted to

walk to his humble residence, but with difficulty. Philip and Charles flew to his aid, and leaning on them, as he glanced from one to the other with evident pleasure, the old man reached the door. "Remain here," he said, "the dwelling is low—ye are better here. I will return to you." He did so in a few minutes, bearing the packet.

Philip took it with a delight he had no words to express, and was well nigh overpowered by his emotion as the familiar hand-writing met his eye. "There can be no doubt," he said, "that it was he—I would swear to his hand-writing among a thousand."

"Do not open it here," said the Fakeer; "but sit and speak to me of him and his parents, and his beloved, for I heard all," continued the old man with a sigh, "and pitied his sad fate."

Philip told him all, and they talked for hours over the lost one; he told him how he had gone to England and married his sister, how the youth beside them was her brother of whom he had heard; and then the old man blessed the youth. "Thou wilt not be the worse

that I have done so," he said; while a tear filled his eye—rested there for awhile—then welling over trickled down his furrowed cheek and was lost in his white beard.

Long, long they talked together, and the day was fast declining ere they left him, promising to return whenever they could; they took away the precious packet with them, to pore over its contents together in Philip's tent.

They opened it with eager anxiety; it was addressed "to any English officer." There were a few lines from Herbert, informing whomsoever should receive it that he was alive, and imploring him to forward it to the Government; and a few more descriptive of his captivity, of his escape from the rock, and his uncertainty for the future.

There were letters too to be forwarded, one to his father, one to Amy; another for Philip himself, which he opened impatiently. It was short—he said he dared not write much. He described his various trials and sufferings, and the kindness of the old Fakeer, without whose aid he must have perished: he besought him not to despair of finding him alive, even

though years should intervene between that time and when the letter should reach him.

"Nor will I despair, dear Herbert," cried Philip; "never, never! The hand of Providence is clearly discernible through all this chain of events; it will lead us, Charles, to the close. Yet we must be secret: these letters must not be delivered, nor must our present success be known in England till we can confirm the glad tidings, or for ever despair."

There was not a day while the army remained there that the friends did not visit the old Fakeer. They could not prevail on him to accept money; but there were articles which were of use to him—cloth, and blankets, and other trivial things, which he received gladly. They left him with sorrow, and with little hope that they should ever renew their intercourse with him. Yet they met again.

The progress of the army was slow; for the forage, except in a few places, had been destroyed, and the draught- and carriage-bullocks died by hundreds. The Nizam's force, too, had joined the British army, and it presented a most gorgeous Eastern display, far more im-

posing than any Philip had yet seen. Men of all nations of the East, and tribes of India, the courtly Persian, the reckless Afghan, the wild Beloche, the sturdy Pathan, the more slender and effeminate Dukhanee, the chivalrous Rajpoot and hardy Mahrattas, all were mingled in a wild confusion—men hardly belonging to any corps, and clustered round every leader's standard, apparently as fancy, or caprice, or hope of plunder dictated. The force was utterly inefficient however for the purposes of the war, for the leader had no control over it, nor could he supply it with food; and his fidelity to the English cause, if not the Nizam's also, was questionable.

At every day's march the distress of the army increased. Men were upon the lowest rations; the cavalry were almost inefficient from the starvation and weakness of their horses, and the active and irregular cloud of the Nizam's horse consumed what little forage was left in the country, long ere it could be collected by the English. The leaves of mango and other trees, where they could be procured, were even gladly devoured by the starved cattle in lieu of

other food. Nevertheless, in spite of these discouraging prospects, the army advanced by slow marches; and as the heat was moderate—for the height of the table-land of Mysore, from three to four thousand feet, gives it a temperate climate at all seasons of the year—the troops, long accustomed only to the enervating climate of Coromandel, gained fresh vigour and health as they proceeded.

Meanwhile the advance of the English, though he often affected to despise it, was a source of the greatest alarm to the Sultaun. In vain had he consulted the stars, in vain tried magical arts. They still proceeded, and drew nearer to his capital daily. Nevertheless he heard accounts of the distress and famine prevalent in the English camp; and could he only gain time, even by negotiation or by retreat, he might protract the campaign so that the English would be obliged to retreat, and he would then pour upon them his whole force and annihilate them for ever. Night after night was occupied in discussions with his chief advisers, Meer Sadik, Kishun Rao and Purnea, but their counsel was hardly listened to in the

wild schemes which were revolving in his mind.

"Our government is the gift of God!" he would cry. "Are kafirs who heap abuse on the name of Mohamed his apostle to subdue it? Are we not blessed with holy dreams, with visions of conquest, and of possessing the five kingdoms of Hind? Are all these for nought? I tell ye nay, but true and holy revelations, even such as were made to Mohamed, whose shadow upon earth we are. Here we have daily written them—records of our thoughts—prophecies of our greatness, which as they become fulfilled we will read to ye. Ah, ye sceptics! Let the kafirs advance—they come into the snare. Ha, ha! their cattle are dying. How Jaffar Sahib?" —he was present—"thou didst see them."

"Peer-o-Moroshid! they are," replied Jaffar Sahib; "they can hardly drag the guns: even the men are harnessed, and work like beasts."

"They will get tired of that, perhaps, soon. Let them come on, I say, even to the gates of the town. I fear not—why should I fear? my destiny is bright."

"But why not give up the prisoners, Asylum

of the Earth? May your generosity increase!" said Meer Sadik, whose dauntless spirit spoke out before the Sultaun. "Dost thou not break faith in keeping them?"

"By Alla and the Prophet thou art bold to say that, Meer Sadik. No! never shall they be wrested from me: rather would I kill them with my own hand. Have they not broken faith, to make war on us without a cause—to destroy our country, to enter into a league against us? We swear before ye, sirs, not one shall return alive."

Tippoo retained Jaffar always about his person. He was spy, plotter, adviser, executioner by turns. That night—shortly before the action which followed at Arikéra—they were alone in the Sultaun's tent. All had left him, and he was uneasy and fretful. No wonder, for his thoughts at night were terrible, and he could not bear to be alone. He had summoned one of his favourite ladies from the city, and sought in her society a respite from his thoughts. All was in vain: he could not shut out from himself his danger, though he scoffed at it openly.

"And thou hast seen him, Jaffar, and spoken with him?"

"I have: he is a conceited, arrogant Dukhanee—a man to be despised—a man whose rapacity is not to be satisfied."

"And what said he?"

"He was haughty at first, and it was hard to hear how he spoke of thee, O Sultaun!"

The monarch gnashed his teeth. "Ya Alla! grant me power to chastise those who mock thy favourite," he cried, looking up devoutly. "But thou gavest the letter?"

"I did."

"And the bills for money?"

"Yes; he said he would forward that to the Prince at Hyderabad."

"And will he fight against me? will he not come over at once and desert them?"

"He dare not; but he will be neutral, I think. But he is well where he is: his presence is a burthen to the kafir Feringhees; they wish him—anywhere. His men devour the forage, and they starve. Ha! ha! ha!"

"Good, Jaffar. Now listen; those prisoners, Jaffar—the boys—the cursed Feringhees know of them and the others."

"Let them not trouble you, Light of the

Earth! Your poor slave has, Inshalla! done some service."

"How! wouldst thou return them?"

"Return them! no, by your head and eyes, no! What, eat so much abomination! Darest thou trust me? I am your slave, there can be no fear. I have eaten your salt, I am the child of your house; command me and I will do thine orders."

"What dost thou advise?"

"For the boys? they are young, they are but women—nay worse. Why shouldst thou hesitate?"

"Speak thy mind fully, Jaffar."

"Death!" said the other in a hollow tone, as if he feared the very echo of the words.

"Good," said the Sultaun, but his lip quivered as he spoke; "thou wilt require a warrant. Write one, I will seal it."

"I cannot write, O Sultaun."

"Pah! why are men such fools? Give me the inkstand. There, go now—even now. Let it be done silently, the people must not know of it. One by one—thou knowest, and spill no blood. Enough—begone! thou must return

tomorrow by this time, I have more work for thee."

"On my head and eyes be it," he said, and departed from the tent.

The Sultaun could not bear to be alone; he arose and entered the inner apartments. The lady was alone; she was very beautiful and very fair for her country. Her soft melting eye spoke of other love than that of the cold Sultaun's, and its expression was much heightened by the deep black tinge she had given to her eyelids. Her dress was the purest white muslin woven with silver flowers, which she had thrown over her gracefully, and which partially covered a petticoat of most gorgeous cloth-of-gold. The floor of the tent was covered with fine white calico, and on one side was a low couch, on the other a crimson satin mattress, which formed a dais, furnished with pillows of blue velvet. She arose and made a graceful salutation, but did not speak; for his brow was knit into a frown which she feared, and he was not safe when he looked so.

He threw himself upon the dais, and buried his face in his hands. He was long silent, but she dared not address him.

He spoke at last to himself, and she could hear every word in the still silence.

"It is my destiny," he said gloomily—"the destiny of my house. The Brahmin who warned me—he who spoke out against me fearless of death, and now lives in the dungeon yonder, he told me of the Feringhees. Whence is their mighty power? They roll on, a fierce tide against me. Is there no hope? Ah for one hour of his presence who was ever victorious over them—my father! but he is gone for ever, and I am alone—ay, alone."

The girl was touched; she drew nearer to him.

"Men of Islam!" he resumed after a pause, "will ye not fight for me? Why should I fear? Alla Akbar! Assud Ali is false; he has taken the money and the letter. Pah! I have humbled myself to that proud Nizam Ali—to him who trampled on me and scorned my alliance. But no matter, we may be even with him yet. Assud Ali is false to his cause, and will aid mine. Ya Alla kureem, that he may! Then the Mahrattas will follow: they are wily—they keep aloof—they will see how the game goes, and

join the winners. Why should I fear? Zeman Shah in the north with the Afghans; then the men of Delhi and the Rohillas, the hill tribes. The French are now wary and cool, but they will rise: one action over, and all is safe. Then conquest comes, and these hateful sons of Satan are driven away for ever."

At last he was silent. There were visions of gorgeous triumphs passing through his heart, which defied words to express them.

He looked up, and his eyes met those of the lady. "Come hither," he said, "and sit by me. Thine eyes are full of love; they are not like those of men abroad. When I look into theirs, I read distrust, faithlessness; I doubt them all, Fureeda. They know of many things which, were they to tell the Feringhees — But no: they dare not. What thinkest thou child—how goes the game?"

"I am your slave," she said, "but I will tell the truth. Men say thou dost not fight, and they are gloomy. Why are not the troops of the Sircar led on against the kafirs? Why are they kept in idleness, retreating day by day? Where are thy valiant cushoons—all thy ar-

tillery—all thy invincible and thundering cavalry? Arouse thee, O my lord! Let even a slave's voice aid that of thy mother—thy wife—those who would fain see the glory of the Faith exalted, and the tiger of Mysore rend to pieces the kafir English. Art thou a man and a soldier to bear this? By Alla! were I one, and in thy place," she said, her eye flashing, "I would mount my horse and cry Bismilla! as I led my warriors to victory. Art thou a coward?"

"Coward! sayest thou this to me," cried the Sultaun, gnashing his teeth, as his small dagger flashed from its scabbard in his girdle, and was upraised to strike.

The lady trembled, but bowed low before him. "Strike!" she said; "I can die at thy feet. The lonely Fureeda will not be missed upon the earth; all who loved me are dead, thou well knowest, and my spirit yearns to be with theirs. Strike! I am ready."

"And dost thou think me a coward, Fureeda?" he exclaimed as his hand dropped.

"Alla and the Prophet forbid! I know thou art brave, but men complain. They tell thee not of it, but they complain that the old fire

is quenched within thee. I, who fear not, tell thee this truth."

"It is not, by Alla! I will show them it is not. We will see what the morrow brings. The night is gloomy and hot; there may be rain—in that they will be helpless; then we will set on them, and cry Alla Yar! Now get thee to thy bed. The night advances and we would be alone, for visions press on us which we would record for those destined to follow our steps."

She left him, and lay down on the bed but could not sleep. The night was oppressive, and she watched him. He wrote awhile; then she saw him put aside his paper and lie down—sleep had come to him. She arose, took a light shawl and threw it over him gently. Then she sat down and watched him. Presently the thunder muttered in the distance, and flash after flash of blue lightning penetrated through the tent, dimming the light of the lamp which burned beside him. The thunder came nearer and nearer, and the loud patter of heavy rain upon the canvas of the tent she thought would have awakened him; but he slept on. She

was naturally terrified at thunder, but she did not relinquish her watch, for he was restless and disturbed in his sleep. Now and then he muttered names, and she could hear him when the roar of the thunder ceased for an instant or two. Soon his dreams were more distinct, and she shuddered as she listened.

"Jaffar!" he said, "Jaffar! away with them to the rock—No, not yet!—do not kill them yet; there are two I love—spare them! do not spill blood—remember I told thee not. Kafirs, sons of defiled mothers, we will set on them tomorrow Inshalla! Inshalla!—Coward? we are no coward." Then after awhile his sleep was more uneasy, she saw his brows knit and his hands clench fast. "Do not approach! Alla, Alla! they come. Aid me—holy Prophet, aid me all ye saints!—Mathews! away, old man! I did not kill thee—it was not my orders. Away, or by Alla I will strike — Your faces are cold and blue; are the English so in death? Go, go, ye are devils from hell. Go! I will not come;—by Alla I will not! Go! my destiny is yet bright and clear."

Then he was quiet for awhile, but big drops of sweat stood on his brow. She would have given worlds to wake him; she wondered the thunder did not, for peal after peal crashed overhead.

Once more he spoke: it was very hurried and low, and she could hear a word only now and then. "Again Mathews? kafir Feringhee! I tell thee it was not my order—the poison was not for thee. I will not come—there are devils with thee—hundreds! Why didst thou bring them from the rock? Why do ye look on me with your dead eyes? Away—I will strike!—old man come no nearer! Ha! thy lips move, thou—"

There was a crash of thunder which seemed to rend the earth—a flash of lightning which almost blinded her. Fureeda cowered to the ground as the Sultaun started up, his eyes glaring, and his hands clenched and thrust out before him, as he looked wildly around.

"They are gone," he said. "Holy Alla, what thunder! that is better than their voices. What, thou here, Fureeda? Did I speak, girl?"

"My lord was restless in his sleep, but I heard no words." She dared not tell the truth.

"Enough—it is well. Alla aids us with this rain and storm; they will be in confusion, and we will set on them early. As the day dawns thou shalt see, girl, that we are no coward."

CHAPTER X.

It was truly an awful night: the wind howled in fierce blasts over the plain, driving with it cold and piercing rain, which benumbed men who had only been accustomed to the heat of the Carnatic and the coast; the bullocks and horses of the cavalry, exhausted by dearth of food, could no longer struggle through the mud, and fell in great numbers to rise no more. Then men applied their shoulders to the wheels, and laid hold of the drag-ropes of the guns with wild energy, and urged them on with loud shouts and cries. Everywhere the most appalling confusion existed, for the enemy was in front, at a short distance, and, with their knowledge of the ground and of the country, what might not be effected during such a night?

But it was too wild even for the enemy to venture forth to an attack, which might after all be doubtful. The thunder roared and crashed over head in stunning peals ; men shouted, but were not heard ; there was no road to be discovered, and infantry and cavalry, often mingled together, floundered on in the inky darkness.

Amongst the rest the commander vainly strove to track the road, but soon lost it, and with his staff wandered they knew not whither, while parties of the enemies' horse were everywhere abroad. It was a fearful risk for one on whom so much depended. They halted, at length, upon a rising ground, but could distinguish only wild groups of struggling figures, as the vivid lightning disclosed them for instants only at a time everywhere around them. Sometimes it appeared as if the enemy were surrounding them, for the deep booming sound of their kettle-drums and the wild shrill neighing of horses came clearly upon the blast at intervals ; and in the distance they often thought they could see masses of troops marshaled in array, and the lightning flashing from the points of spears and bayonets.

Their situation was very precarious, and Philip and some others essayed to find the way back to the point from which they had set out, and after much difficulty they succeeded. Plunging through a ploughed field alone, he found a road beyond, and venturing slowly and cautiously, heard, through the din of thunder and roar of the wind, the welcome sound of English voices. It was enough,—he retraced his steps to the place where he had left his General, by the glare of the lightning, and gave him the welcome news; he was eagerly followed, and once more the commander was placed in safety.

The wind and the rain ceased; gradually the storm passed onwards, and a few stars shone out here and there, gradually heralding the brilliant dawn. It broke at length to the expectant eyes of that wearied army, and in a short time the confusion of the night before was restored; men repaired to their proper standards, and discipline was once more restored.

With the earliest dawn the Sultaun had been astir, and, calling to him the leaders upon whom he most depended, he gave orders for an assault upon the exhausted English. "They will be our

prey," he said; "let them come on, let them fall into the trap which destiny has marked out for them. Shookr Alla! they have come so far that to retreat is impossible—they must advance into our hands. Go, in the name of the Most Mighty, go and conquer! your destiny is bright; this day will be a fair one for the honour of Islam, a day which men shall record in history, and the nations of the West tremble at when they hear it."

The leaders wondered what had so suddenly changed his resolution of not giving battle, for the day before he had been obstinately bent upon retreat into the city; but they were glad, for the troops were loud in their murmurs, and retreat day after day before a weakened enemy was fast undermining any notions of discipline or subordination which still remained. They obeyed his various orders with alacrity; and as the light became broader and clearer, and the English army could be descried, a shower of rockets was directed against it, which, although annoying, was of little effect.

The Sultaun looked on from a rising ground: before him the two armies were spread out, his

own cushoons in large masses, for the while inactive, with the long lines and columns of the English opposed to them, and the artillery vainly endeavouring to get the guns into position; the cattle were exhausted, and could hardly move. He saw the annoyance the rockets caused, and exulted.

"Shabash! Shabash! give them more; ride, Khan Sahib," he said to an officer near him, "and tell them not to spare the rockets and the shot. Mashalla! they fall into the midst of the kafirs and kill many; tell them they shall be rewarded well. Ha! they are about to charge. Holy Alla! look at the miserable horses, tottering as they move; *they* think to overwhelm the true believers—Ha! ha! ha! See, they advance—Dogs, kafirs, come on, ye defiled, to your destruction! Now, Rhyman Khan, upon them and annihilate them! Oh for Kasim Ali Patél! he would have led the charge. Ha! there is no need—they turn! they turn! the cowards—the less than men—the faint-hearted!"

But his exultation was soon checked, for when the lines of red-coats advanced he saw his own cushoons retire, and one fell into confusion.

Assud Ali and his cloud of cavalry were close upon them—the Sultaun was in agony. "If he is true to me he will not charge," he cried. "Alla! Alla! turn his heart;—holy saints and martyrs, let him not destroy them! I vow coverings to your tombs and offerings. He will charge now—he moves; Alla Kereen, I cannot look at it."

"He is steady," exclaimed one near him: "he stirs not."

"Enough, enough! the bait has taken, and we are safe. Ha, ha, ha! Inshalla! there is no mind like ours, for, with the blessing of Alla, it is all-powerful over our enemies. Assud Ali will earn this day a hopeful reputation—may Alla give him a good digestion of it! And now, since the crisis is past, give orders to retire. We have checked the Feringhees, we have turned their boasted cavalry. Ye saw, sirs, they dared not attack; Alla Akbar! we will retire into the city; let them come on, we shall be ready to meet them."

And he retreated that day to his fortified position under the guns of the fort; the English took up his late position upon the field, and advanced even beyond it; but the distress in

the army was frightful, and there was no prospect of relief. Abercromby, who, it had been hoped, would have joined it, was not to be heard of, nor were the Mahrattas; there was no forage—every blade of grass, even the trees, had been destroyed; most of the wells and tanks were poisoned by branches of Euphorbium thrown into them; the cattle grew weaker and weaker, and died by hundreds. No man had hope that, before the efficient army of the Sultaun, and against a strong fort, there could be any possible hope of victory, and all looked anxiously for the decision of him who led them on.

It was on the evening of that day that Philip Dalton and Charles Hayward ascended a small hill near the camp, and looked forth over the glorious view which was spread out before them. A few miles distant was the city, the tall minarets of the mosque in the fort, and here and there a small dome, with clusters of white-terraced houses, sparkling among the thick groves which surrounded them; the long lines of the regular walls of the fort, and their tall cavaliers, could be seen; and in the plain

before them redoubts were everywhere thrown up, between which the gay tents of the huge army glittered in the evening sun; for a flood of golden light poured upon the city and the camp from the declining sun; and as the light evening clouds sailed slowly on, the view was chequered by soft shadows, which added to the beauty of the scene. The broad Cavery glittered where waters stood deep in pools, and its broad and rocky bed could be seen around the fort and town, and stretching far away to the western hills; there was no bridge across the river, but with his telescope Philip could make out the ruins of that which had been destroyed. In all directions columns of white smoke were ascending, straight into the air, from the burning villages, which had been fired, lest they should afford protection or shelter to the enemy.

Both were long silent, as they sat looking upon the prospect, for their thoughts were sad; and the hope which had filled their hearts when they had left Bangalore victorious, trusting soon to be before Seringapatam and to see the Sultaun humbled, and the captives of years

brought forth in triumph, had now given place to despair; for the delay even of a day was perilous to the whole army, and already the determination had been made of destroying the battering train, and retreating until a better system of supply for the army could be organized, and the strength of the exhausted cattle restored.

"Poor fellow!" said Philip—he was thinking of Herbert Compton as the city lay before him; "if he be immured in a dungeon yonder, he will have heard our firing, he will have known of our advance, and we cannot conceive the state of anxiety and suspense he must be in, and how dreadful will be his disappointment."

"Are we then to retreat, Philip?"

"I believe it is so determined," he replied. "For the public cause it is good, for we shall have gained experience; but we shall return soon, I trust, Charles. I hope and trust in a short time, when forage is more plentiful; and for you, proud Sultaun," he said, looking towards the city, "there is a severe reckoning in store. O my poor Herbert! if thou art there,

may God preserve you to a deliverance at our hands!"

But now the evening was fast closing in, and the fires of the Sultaun's army were sparkling in the dusky plain; gradually but quickly the city was fading before their sight, and the quiet pools of the Cavery, wherein the deep yellow and orange of the sky was reflected, shone more brightly amidst the gloom around them: there was no use in staying longer, and they arose and returned to the camp. In a few days, having destroyed the noble battering-train, the army retreated towards Bangalore.

The Sultaun sat on the high cavalier which stands at the south-east angle of the fort, surrounded by his officers; the busy camp of the English was within sight, in which it was plain that there was a movement; he was gloomy and dispirited, in spite of the force around him, which was ostentatiously displayed; there was a secret misgiving in his heart, a dread of private treachery, of the unfaithfulness of the army, though one and all had sworn to defend their trust; the men around him hardly spoke but in whispers.

"They will be upon us soon," said the Khan to Kasim, who stood by him, "and the thunder of the English cannon will be heard for the first time at Seringapatam. Ya Alla avert it! for their destiny is great."

"Shame on thee, Khan!" cried the young man; "let them come—I for one will welcome a stroke against the kafirs: I have not drawn a sword for months, and am tired of this inactivity."

"Thou art not strong yet, Kasim."

"As I ever was, Khan; feel my arm, its sinews are as firmly knit as ever; let them come, I say, and Alla defend the right! are we not the children of the faith, and they are infidels?"

"Kasim Ali! where is Kasim Ali?" cried the voice of the Sultaun. He answered and stepped forward.

"Look through this," continued the monarch, handing his telescope to the young man; "tell me what thou seest, for by Alla I cannot believe mine own eyes."

"Cowards!" cried the young man after a moment, "they retreat, their backs are towards us."

"Alla Hu Akbar! Ya Alla kureem!" cried the Sultaun; "then our prayers have been listened to. Ha! ha! ha! they turn—the cowards—the kafir dogs! They are gone—away, after them, my friends—dog their steps to the very gates of Madras. Inshalla! our hunt will be Cornwallis! A jaghire to him who brings us his head! Now are our dreams come true; our visions wherein we have trusted. Be not deceived, my friends; behold the proofs that I am the favoured of the Prophet, and that though sometimes the power of prophecy is withdrawn from us, yet the light which is within us burns still and will never be extinguished. Away, ye of the household cavalry! Kasim Ali, Rhyman Khan, away after them!—yet stay—go not too far; prudence and wariness have won us this victory; we must not abuse it. Ye must return in three days, when we will determine upon future operations. Begone!"

But as they prepared hastily for the service, the movement was countermanded, to the bitter disappointment of Kasim Ali; for the Sultaun feared risking his best horse against the com-

bined forces of the English and the Nizam's cavalry, and ordered them to remain; nor was there for a considerable period any movement of interest. Strange it was that he made no attack upon the retiring English, nor any effort to retake Bangalore, his once favourite fortress; but the danger for the moment had passed away, and, though the thunder growled and the lightning flashed in the far distance, there appeared no immediate risk of the approach of the tempest.

The campaign had been an arduous one for poor Ameena, who had far overrated her strength; indeed the rapid marches made by the Sultaun, whose personal activity was wonderful, had sorely tried the Khan himself; and he had been selected for the duty of escorting the ladies of the Harem from Bangalore to the capital. He had therefore had no part in the late movements of the campaign, but remained at his post without the city, accompanied by the young Patél, who was sufficiently recovered to bear once more his active share in the command of the body of horse to which he had been appointed.

But as soon as the immediate alarm of the British advance and siege of the fort was over, they returned to their old ways of life; the Khan to the enjoyment of the repose of his zenana, and to the society of Ameena, whose health, owing to fatigue and over-exertion, had been indifferent; and Kasim to his daily attendance at the Sultaun's Durbar, where he soon grew to be familiar with the strange and perplexing character he served.

So long as the hurry and bustle of the arriving and departing troops, the preparations for siege, and the constant alarms of the English continued, the minds of all were filled with speculations as to the issue of the war—some swayed by hope, some by fear. Kummoo was like the rest, and because the objects of her hate were absent, she was powerless; but when once more all was fairly tranquil, her thoughts returned rapidly into their old channels; and as the Khan never now visited her, but, contented with Ameena, merely sent cold inquiries as to the state of her health, she detested her sister-wife more than ever, and

perhaps with better cause than at first, since the effect was more lasting.

From time to time she had urged her mother and her old servant, to aid her in preparing the charms and spells which were to work Ameena's ruin; and after long delays, caused partly by the timidity of the old woman to begin, her deferred selection of lucky and unlucky days, and often by her scruples of conscience—for she believed firmly in her own power—a night was determined on when they were to attend and assist in the ceremony.

Meanwhile, and especially as the day drew near, the attention of the two wives was more and more turned upon Ameena. Gradually they had removed from her the thought that they were inimical to her, and at the time we speak of she could not have supposed that they, whose professions of friendship and acts of kindness were constant, harboured any thought of ill towards her. If the old woman herself had seen the innocent and beautiful being against whom she was plotting, it is probable her heart would have relented to-

wards one whose thoughts were purity and innocence, and whose only sin was often an indulgence in thoughts of one—more tender than befitted her condition—whom she had loved from the first. And yet there was every excuse for her; the Khan was old, and weak in many points; and, though a brave soldier, so superstitious that the merest trifles affected him powerfully, and much of his time was spent in averting by ceremonies (for which he had to pay heavily) glances of the evil eye which he fancied had been cast on him when any pain or ache affected a frame already shaken by the wars of years.

Ameena could not love him, though he was kind and indulgent to her; she honoured, tended, respected him, as a child would do a father; but love, such as the young feel for each other in that clime, she felt not for him, and she had much ado to repress the feelings which her own heart, aided by her fond old nurse Meeran, constantly prompted for Kasim. Poor Ameena! she tried to be happy and cheerful; but she was like a fair bird in a gilded

cage, which, though it often pours forth its songs in seeming joyousness, still pines for liberty and the free company of its mates.

It was with mingled feelings of awe and superstitious terror, that the Khan's two wives betook themselves to the house of Kummoo's mother, on the day assigned for the incantation. As their food had been cooked by their own women in their own private apartments, they had been able to practise the requisite abstinence from the various spices, condiments, and particular descriptions of food which had been interdicted by the old woman. They had bathed as often as had been directed, and observed all the injunctions to perfect purity of body that had been laid upon them. The night was dark and gloomy, and was well suited for their walk to and fro from the house unobserved. They hardly spoke, as, closely veiled, and under the guidance of Sozun, they entered the house and at once passed on to the inner apartments.

"Do not delay," said Kummoo's mother, "I am unclean; ye will be defiled if ye stay here;

she is within, in the chamber." They obeyed her, and entered it. It was a small square room; the floor was of beaten clay, and had been most carefully swept; the walls and roof were quite bare, and there was nothing whatever in the apartment. The old woman sat at the head of a square figure, divided into many compartments, traced on the floor, in which were written many Arabic characters and ciphers; the figure was a rude imitation of a man, in square lines and crosses; and the silence, the dim light of a miserable lamp, and the crouching figure of the old crone, who was mumbling some words as her beads passed rapidly through her fingers, inspired them with dread.

"Soh! ye are come at last, children," she said, in answer to their benediction; "are ye pure from all taint? In the name of Soleemān! of Pharoon! of Shudad! of Israeel! of Ulleekun and Mulleeckun! I conjure ye to say the truth. If ye are not, beware! for the evil of this will fall upon ye."

"We are pure, O mother! we have eaten

only what thou hast directed, and bathed as it was necessary."

"Good! Now attend: here is a knife, and I have here a white fowl; one of you must behead it and scatter the blood over the charm."

Both hesitated and trembled.

"Shame on ye, cowards!" cried the crone. "Shame! without this the charm is vain—the offering is vain! Without this, do ye think they will attend to hear your commands?"

"Who, mother?"

"Who?—Muleeka, Hamoos, Mublut, Yoosuf, the deputies of the Shitan, Mullik Yeitshan, Shekh Suddoo, the Father of Mischief. Obey! I tell ye the time passes, and your livers will dry up instead of hers, if ye refuse to do this."

Both again hesitated, but Kummoo was daring; she at last seized the knife and the fowl, and, in very desperation, at one stroke severed the head from the body.

"Hold it fast! hold it fast!" cried the crone, for its convulsive motions could hardly be restrained; "it bleeds well—that is a good sign; so now hold it there: let the blood sprinkle over

all. They are present now; I feel they drink the blood." And she continued her incantation in a low tone, while her hearers were paralyzed with fear.

At length she broke out aloud, and desired them to repeat the words, "Ai Boodboo! Ai Shekh Suddoo! Ai Nursoo! Ai Numrood! Ai Murdood! and ye who are present, having drunk blood, enter into her—into Ameena—and possess her! Let her have no rest by night or by day! As in each of your names I pierce this lime with five needles, so may your sharp stings pierce her heart! as they rot by the acid, so may her liver consume within her! Ameen! Ameen! Ameen! Ameen! Ameen!" And as she pronounced each Ameen! she stuck a needle through the green lime she held in her hand. "Enough!" she cried, "it is done! Leave this at her door, or at her bed-side, that she may see it when she rises in the morning. You will soon hear of her, Inshalla!"

They were glad to escape from the place, for guilt was in their hearts, and terror of the demons whom they believed to have been present. They did not even stay with the old

lady, but hurried home as fast as was possible in the darkness. When all were asleep, Kummoo stole softly into the outer apartment of that where Ameena was, and deposited the charmed lime at the threshold of the door, surrounding it with a circle of red powder, as she had been directed: the door opened inwards, so there was no fear that it would be displaced.

CHAPTER XI.

We fear we can hardly convey to our readers any adequate sense of the terror with which, as she arose in the morning, and opening the door, essayed to go forth to her ablutions for morning prayer. Ameena regarded the fatal sign which lay before her; a faint cry which she had uttered, roused the Khan, who darting to her side beheld with equal or indeed greater dismay than hers, the dreadful sight.

A matter so trifling and absurd would even, to the most uneducated person in this enlightened land, only furnish matter for ridicule; but to Ameena and her husband, who with their

countrymen generally were deeply imbued with the belief of jins, fairies, spirits of the air, and other supernatural agents and devils, supposed to be at the command of any who choose by study or penance to qualify themselves for the exercise of power over them, the sight was one of horror: the thought that their deaths were desired, the death of both, or certainly of one, first struck upon their hearts; a dull but a deadly blow it was to Ameena, to whom the first sight of the awful spectacle gave a terrible earnest that she was the person for whom it was intended.

The Khan could give her no comfort. She had no friend but her old nurse Meeran, who, even more superstitious than Ameena, and herself mistress as she thought of many potent charms, well knew the power which had directed such an one as that before them.

I would not assert that men of station, respectability and education in India, among the Mahomedans, are not many of them free from the debasing belief in charms and witchcraft, even though their existence is allowed by the Koran; but no one will be hardy enough to deny

that by far the greater part dare not disbelieve it; that many practice it in secret, if not themselves, at least by aid of Fakeers and old women; and that in their harems, among their ladies, to doubt the existence of it would be as sinful as to doubt that of the Prophet himself. But it must be remembered that the Khan was a man born in the lower grade of society, that he had been a reckless soldier of fortune, was ignorant, and, though he had risen to high rank and wealth, was far from having shaken off the superstitions with which he had begun life.

All that day dismay was in the household; all seemed equally struck with consternation; and the authors of the evil gave to Ameena their most hearty sympathy, while they exulted over the deed, and saw that the arrow drove home to her very heart. In the general consultation which ensued they gave it as their opinion that it could have been intended for no other than Ameena, and that her evil destiny had led her to look upon it.

Kasim Ali was sent for by the Khan, and with better sense than the rest tried to argue him out of a belief that there was any danger,

to assure him that no one could have ill-will to one so pure, so innocent, and so unknown as his wife. But his heart misgave him as to the author of the evil; he dared not, however, mention this, and there was no cause for suspicion except in his own thoughts.

Devoted to the Khan, and more than ever anxious for Ameena, of whose declining health, under the horrible ideas that she was possessed by devils, which preyed on her, he constantly heard through the faithful Zoolfoo from Meeran, Kasim Ali spared no pains to give such ease as he could impart by the performance and directions of those ceremonies which were prescribed to be used in such cases. The most holy Fakeers were consulted; they made expeditions and offered Fateehas* at all the saints' and martyrs' tombs within reach, in her name. Puleetas or lamp-charms were burned in her name, and she was fumigated with the smoke. Charmed words were written by holy Fakeers and Moolas, which she sometimes ate among her food; at others they

* Offerings for the remission of sins and favour of Heaven.

were washed off the paper into water which she drank.

Many of these ceremonies were so curious that we are almost tempted to describe them minutely; but as they would occupy much space (and, alas! we are restricted to pages and lines,) we are compelled to abandon them to imagination: in truth they are so ridiculous and puerile that perhaps they might only provoke risibility, especially in our fair readers, if we should relate them very gravely, and almost insist on their belief in their efficacy.

But all these efforts brought no relief to poor Ameena; sometimes she would rally awhile, and might be seen tending her few flowers, feeding her birds or her pigeons; and though with wasted and pallid features, and a hollow short cough, from which she could obtain no respite, she tried to throw off the dreadful weight at her heart and would sometimes partially succeed, it would again return with redoubled force, and prostrating her strength reduce her, by the slow fever which came with it, to a state of weakness which prevented all motion. The poor girl would lie for hours in her open verandah, gazing

up into the depths of the clear sky above her, in no pain, but with an intense yearning to be at rest for ever, to join the society of the angels and Peris, whom she fancied hovered there ready to receive her. How often she pined for home—to lie on her honoured mother's breast, and breathe away her life in happy repose ; and often she implored the Khan to send her thither.

"It is impossible," he said, "to travel : the English hold the frontiers, the fierce marauding Mahrattas and the Nizam's forces occupy the roads, and it would be madness to attempt so hazardous an undertaking."

No ! she was to hope : such illnesses were long, but Inshalla ! there was hope. Inshalla ! the charms, the spells, the exorcisms would take effect, and she would rise again to be his own Ameena.

But alas ! we grieve to write it, that in one who possessed so many noble qualities, courage, frankness, honesty, sincerity, there should be one terrible failing — a vice rather — which, though not openly discernible, lurked at his heart, and ere long broke forth to the peril of poor Ameena.

Her wasted cheek, the hollow dull eye, though sometimes the large and expressive orbs flashed with a light almost painful to look on, and which to those around her was an earnest that the malignant spirits lurked still within her, caused gradually in the Khan an absence of affection, of solicitude—nay, of that love which he had once delighted to show. He was a sensualist; and in Ameena's faded beauty—for like a withered flower there were only the lineaments traceable of what existed in the full vigour of health; and in her wasted and enfeebled form there was no enjoyment, no attraction. His change to her was gradual, very gradual, but it was perceptible. It would have been merciful, perhaps, had it come at once; it would have prevented days and nights of wretchedness which had no power of alleviation; and with the horrible thoughts and ideas which haunted her, the miserable one of being gradually deserted came upon her slowly, but too surely.

While she lay burned by consuming fever, pallid, exhausted, reduced almost to a skeleton, with parched lips and mouth, there moved

around her bedside, ministering to her trifling wants with a mock gratification and assiduity, —the work of a fiend glutting over the ruin she had caused—the noble form of Kummoo, her features full of beauty, her eyes flashing with love, her every motion one of grace and dignity. She always dressed with the most scrupulous care, generally in the purest white muslin, which, transparent as it was, when she wound it about the upper part of her perfect form, disclosed enough to attract notice, if not desire. She would study the times when the Khan was likely to arrive in his zenana, and, always contriving to be there before him, would rise to depart when he entered.

For a long time he permitted this, only returning the distant salutation she gave him; but gradually he spoke to her, asked after her health, then bade her remain, and so it continued from time to time, until they conversed gaily together.

And at first poor Ameena was glad that they were friends, and that there was a chance that the harmony of intercourse might be restored which once must have existed between them;

but she never heard that he visited Kummoo in her own apartments, or that they met elsewhere than before her; she could not have objected had he done so, for Kummoo was his wife as well as she; but she often sighed for the past, and that her lot had not been cast with one who with her and her alone would have gone through the pilgrimage allotted them upon earth, and in whose love she could have been blest.

Her trial came at last: she heard from Meeran, who had long discerned the approaching intimacy, and detected its gradual development, that the Khan had visited Kummoo in her apartments—that he had dined with her, and spent the evening in her company. She was glad at first—a feeling she had been trying to reason herself into by degrees; but Meeran in her zeal and love was indignant, and sought, but happily with no effect, to inflame her mistress' jealousy. Poor Ameena! jealousy she never felt—that pang was in mercy spared her; she smiled at her nurse's fears, told her that she looked to greater happiness from this—to sweeter intercourse with her sister-wife, and to a friendship which the Khan would share

with both. Alas! these were dreams which cheated her pure and sunny mind, where no evil thought ever intruded—which was full of love and innocence.

But when neglect came—when a day passed and the Khan did not visit her—when she heard that he was constantly in Kummoo's society—when messages came from the lady to inquire after her health, and stated that because the Khan was with her she could not attend her; when day after day elapsed and she saw him not—and when he came his stay was short, his questions hurried and abrupt; and though in her meek and gentle nature she never complained, yet his demeanour would show that he was conscious of having wronged her, and he would be formal, and she fancied even cold—*then* the arrow which had been shot to her very heart of hearts rankled deeply, and, in the utter prostration of her intellect before the misery she suffered, she prayed earnestly for death, in the hope that ere many weeks or days she would be numbered with the dead, and her place among the children of earth become vacant for ever!

How Kummoo exulted in the success of her scheme! she heaped presents upon the old woman by whose aid she had effected it; she gave her jewels from her own stores, clothes of costly price, which the hag treasured up, though the grave was yawning to receive her, and which she vowed to expend in distributions to Fakeers and holy saints for the repose of Kummoo's soul, and her acceptation with Alla. Day after day brought confirmations of the evil work: the bolt had struck—the barb rankled, and could not be withdrawn: Ameena was ill—she wasted away—she burned with fever.

"Ha! ha!" cried the hag "did I not say, when your hand trembled at the sacrifice (it was well ye did it and the blood poured forth freely), that it was accepted—that they drank it? Ha! ye slaves to my will, Iblees and his legions, ye Musoo and Shekh Suddoo, and ye legions of Chooraeel! and ye nine sons of Satan! I thank ye all: abide within her; ye are not to come forth till the exorcism of a more powerful than I am is performed—and where will they find that one, my pearl and my ruby?"

And then by her counsel Kummoo had put

herself in the way of the Khan; and as she bade her to wait patiently the working of the spell, so did she; not taking offence at fancied slights, but adorning herself with jewels, and disclosing her beauteous face to him from time to time. And when there was appearance that he relented, the old woman bade her prepare a feast for him, and gave her a powder to mingle with his food—a charm which should turn his heart, were it of stone, and cause it to become as wax in the hand of the moulder. A spell she had prepared in secret, the ingredients of which were only known to those students of of her mystic art who had devoted years to its accomplishment.

She was successful: all went right. The Khan partook of her food; she sang and played to him, and displayed the witchery of her charms. He had never thought her so lovely; she was his wife, his own Kummoo, once more such as she had been when he took her from her home to his; and a bright field of enjoyment was spread out before them, wherein were flowers blooming, and no shadow to dim their brilliancy. Then came new clothes and jewels,

and money and rich gifts, and the old woman partook of all, and laughed in her heart that she, and she alone, knew the depths of the human mind, whose own passions and not her demons were working the issue which she contemplated.

When is it, however, that guilt is satisfied by one step to gain an end desired? The very progress, the watching the slow process of the machinery of the plot, only causes insatiate desires to accelerate its motion, endless yearnings after the end; fears and doubts of success alternate with guilty terrors, which turn back again and meet the desires for completion. Now that Kummoo had gained her purpose, that the Khan was her daily companion, that Ameena, sick to death, neglected and thrown aside, mourned over her lost happiness, and was regarded as one in whom even devils abode, one whose fate it was to linger for awhile, and then to pass away from the memories of men, even now Kummoo longed for her death, and looked to it impatiently. Once the devil within her had suggested poison, but she put that back with a strenuous effort. "It cannot last

long," she thought; but it did, for Ameena lingered.

The thought constantly arose that Ameena would recover, that again she would see her in her hated beauty: the power she had gained over the Khan would then melt away, and her former state of degradation would be renewed. She held long conversations with Sozun, who, bad as she was, dared not even follow her mistress's thoughts of crime. Hoormut had gained nothing by the spell, for she was still neglected, and the wretched state of Ameena stung her conscience bitterly: often she longed to disclose all; but the dread of the shame and punishment which would have followed, and the vengeance of the reckless woman who had led her on, deterred her. It was enough for her that the mischief which was fast progressing had been done; she would aid its fulfilment no further.

Kasim Ali had been unavoidably absent for some time; the Sultaun's possessions in the Barah Mahal had gradually fallen before the forces of the English under Maxwell and Floyd, and one by one the strong-holds had been reduced. Kistna Gherry still held out, and had

earnestly applied for succours of money and men. The young and daring Kasim was the man on whom the Sultaun's eye rested for the performance of this feat—for it was one—to conduct a large force through the ground occupied by a powerful enemy. Kasim burned for distinction, and he fulfilled his trust manfully; for though pursued hard both by Maxwell and Floyd, at the head of the English cavalry, he eluded them, and, having attained his object, returned into Mysore with but little loss.

It was during his absence that the Khan's change towards Ameena had become visible; and on his return, in reply to his anxious queries as to whether she lived, he was told of her still precarious state, and her fresh cause for misery. Alas! Kasim Ali could not aid her, except by constant messages of kindness through Zoolficar, and proffers of service, even to death, should she require or command them. How often did he long to remonstrate with the Khan upon his behaviour, to implore him to allow her to depart to her own home; but he dared not, that would have been impossible.

* * * * * *

Months had passed: the English army, recruited and invigorated by the fine climate and the luxurious forage of Mysore, and, joined by the Nizam's troops under a new and more honest commander, and also by the Mahrattas, once more advanced upon the capital, in a far different condition to that in which they had before essayed its capture, and fought a battle within sight of their destination. As they proceeded, fort after fort fell before them. The impregnable Nundidroog, commanded by as brave an officer as the Sultaun possessed, Lutf Ali Beg, fell, and few of the garrison escaped. It would have taken the Sultaun months to reduce it with his whole army—which a single detachment of the English effected. Savundroog—"the abode of death"—where the Sultaun exulted that the English went, for he knew its impregnable strength and the deadly jungles by which it was surrounded, that too fell by a *coup de main*. He could not credit it; he raved like a wild beast when the news was brought; but that did not alter the loss, and it was followed by other reverses day after day. It was

true that the success of his son Futteh Hyder against Gurrumcoondah, which had been taken by the Nizam's troops, and which contained the family of his relation, Meer Sahib, revived him for awhile; but the resolute and rapid approach of the English army upon his capital was not to be disguised, and their unvaried success smote hard at his heart, and daunted his army. But there were other causes for dismay on both sides.

Men had begun to ask among themselves, soon after the battle of Arikhéra, as day after day they attended the Durbar, and the band of beautiful English boys, upon whose dancing their eyes had rested in admiration, and to whose delicious voices they had used to listen, did not appear, what had become of them? The many others too who had long languished in confinement, and whom they had used to mock and deride, where were they? And then speculation and conjecture arose, and would not be still, for there went suspicion abroad that they had been destroyed, and it was right. Despite of the Sultaun's care, there were those who told openly in their drunk-

enness that they had strangled them, and that Jaffar Sahib Jemadar had looked on, and while he mocked their cries had encouraged their destroyers: many others too had been secretly murdered in the lonely hill-forts, where they were confined, and even in the secret prisons and apartments of the palace.

Men openly talked of the butchery; and though they hated the English, yet they were men and soldiers, and abhorred the secret murders and the concealment; and all pitied and mourned over the fate of the poor boys, dreading the vengeance of the English when the reckoning should come, and there should be few to meet it. Discontent openly showed itself everywhere: there was a feverish excitement among the troops, a restless desire that the English should arrive, and their suspense be dispelled either by victory or defeat.

The twenty-fifth day of January 1792, was one long remembered by those who witnessed it. The English army, led by its noble commander, now more like a triumphal procession than a slow invasion, had arrived on the distant heights, and were rapidly pouring from them upon the

plain which led to the city; and the Sultaun, dreading an immediate attack, had ordered out the whole of his force, which in glittering array lined the fort-walls, the esplanade before it, the banks of the river, and the redoubts and batteries beyond. It was a gorgeous spectacle: that English host in long narrow and compact columns, their bayonets glancing in the sun, as they moved with measured tread to the sound of their martial music. Everywhere around in wild disorder were crowds of the Nizam's and the Mahratta horse, accompanied by numbers of elephants, many of the men in bright armour, with gay scarfs wound round their steel caps; others in coats-of-mail, or thickly-quilted satin tunics; many in gorgeous cloth of gold or silver, their horses' trappings of velvet or fine cloth; most in white, with gay scarfs and turbans—the whole everywhere restless, clamorous—thousands careering about, firing matchlocks as they advanced; now dashing out to the front and brandishing their spears, without any order, discipline or command, and crying shouts of abuse, or the various war-cries of their respective faiths.

Under the walls was the Sultaun's army,—a vast concourse, arrayed in their regiments and in fair order at their various posts. Everywhere among them moved richly caparisoned elephants, and horses whose riders were as gaily dressed as those of the advancing army. The walls of the fort, the minarets of the mosque, the terraced houses, the trees, every rising ground, were covered with the inhabitants of the fort and the city, looking at the advancing stream of their enemies, which appeared to flow on without resistance. Above all glowed a sun dazzlingly bright, but now declining fast, whose slanting beams lighted up the scene, catching the various objects, and causing them to glitter even more than if they had come from above. The waters of the river—the plain covered with burning villages—whereon one army was in motion, the other waiting to receive them—the fort, the batteries, the mosque and temples, glowed with a brilliance and exciting effect, which the circumstances of the thousands present were not likely to efface from their remembrance.

CHAPTER XII.

After witnessing the gradual wasting and feverish excitement of her young mistress for some weeks, the faithful Meeran could no longer bear to see her wretched condition. She knew how devotedly Kasim Ali loved her, and she determined, as her last resource, to make an appeal to his generosity, if not to his love, to implore him to rescue her from the condition she was in, and to assist her to escape, or at once take her under his roof.

It was late in the evening before that on which the English arrived before the fort, that she betook herself to Kasim's abode. She had openly declared her intention to Ameena; indeed she

had spoken to her of it for days before, and endeavoured gradually to prepare her to abandon the Khan and fly to her home—distant though it was—or to seek at once the protection of the Patél. His mother too, whose village, though many days' journey distant, she thought it possible she might be able to reach, and she felt assured would receive her, after resting there for awhile, she could pursue her journey to Hyderabad; and Ameena timidly, distrustfully and yet anxiously, had at last given permission to her to go and ascertain if it were possible.

Meeran had placed Zoolficar upon the watch to note the return of the young Patél from his tour of duty to rest for the night; and when she was apprised of that, she bade her young mistress farewell for the while, and telling her to be of good cheer, that she would soon return with joyful news, she departed.

Zoolfoo awaited her without, and in a few minutes they had arrived at the Patél's abode. Anxiously they looked around, lest any one should observe them, but there was only one woman at some distance, whom they hardly heeded; they opened the door of the court-yard,

which they found unfastened, and leaving it in the same state, (for they knew not why it was opened,) they passed on to the Patél. He was wearied with his day's attendance on the Sultaun, and lay reclining on his carpet, reading as usual, which was a solace to him after the empty compliment, the lies, the inflated vanity of the Sultaun's words, and more frequently of late his querulous remarks and violent bursts of passion. They hesitated for a minute; but he had heard the noise in the verandah, and, supposing it to be his servants, desired them to enter.

"It is I, Khodawund," said Zoolfoo, "and I have brought my sister—she would speak with thee."

"Holy Prophet! what hath happened?" cried the young man, starting up in great agitation; "she is not worse?"

"No, my lord; she is, praise be to Alla! better," answered Meeran; "I think her more cheerful than she hath been for many days. She arose to the evening prayer and walked about the court-yard; the wind was cool, and refreshed her. But ah! Patél, she is not what she was;" and Meeran burst into tears.

"I know, nurse, I know she is not; thy brother here hath daily brought me word of her—news which Alla, who sees my heart, knows that I think on day and night; in my dreams she is before me, in my waking thoughts I see her, sometimes lovely as when I first beheld her, and now dim-eyed and wasted. Alas! that such should be her destiny; alas! that so fair a flower should wither under the blighting chill of neglect. Would to Alla I could aid her! my life, my heart's blood should be hers if she —"

"I knew it! I knew it!" cried the nurse, in an ecstacy of delight, as she had listened to the young man, and now suddenly interrupted him; "I knew it! Thou canst aid her, Patél Sahib—thou canst save her, O Jemadar, and thou wilt! thou wilt!" And she cast herself at his feet and sobbed aloud.

"Rise, Meeran, this is unseemly," said Kasim gently; "again I swear to thee, if I can aid her, even by peril of my life, I will do it."

"Listen then, Meer Sahib," she continued, rising and wiping her eyes; "I have gained her consent—I have spoken to her already—I

have told her thou art willing, that thou wilt aid her in flight—and assist her beyond the city, from whence she can escape to thy mother's and wait there till thou canst be freed from hence, or that she can rest there till she has strength to go on. Wilt thou not aid her? By the head of thy mother, by thy hopes of paradise, I conjure thee to do it, O Patél!"

"But the Khan," said Kasim, "will he not let her go?—the enemy is in the path, but were it Satan I would face him for her."

"The Khan?" cried the nurse,—"thooh! I spit on him for a man; his days are wasted in dalliance with her who, as sure as Alla rules above us, is the author of this calamity. Speak to him? No, by the Prophet!—she hath asked him a thousand times, and I have too. 'The enemy is out,' saith he, 'the English kafirs, who would make a captive of her; it would be madness.' Bah! they do not war against women as he does. No! there is no hope from him."

"But will he not relent towards her?"

"Alla is my witness, no! for a week he hath not seen her, and the poor soul is cut to the heart by the neglect; she is an angel or a peri,

Meer Sahib, or she could not bear this indignity."

Kasim sighed. "Has she strength?" he said after awhile.

"Ay, enough for that; her body is weak but her spirit is stout; if once she was bent on escape, it would turn her mind from the thought of the curse, and she would recover as soon as she had escaped from these accursed walls."

"Alas!" sighed Kasim, "how dare I leave my post at such a moment, when the English are upon us, and every man must be true to his salt? Why was not this said a week sooner?"

"Thou wert long absent, Meer Sahib, and since thou hast returned there has not been a day, hardly an hour, when I have not spoken to her of this."

"Stay!" he cried, a sudden thought seeming to strike him, "her father lives, does he not?"

"Inshalla! Meer Sahib, who does not know Roostum Ali Beg at Hyderabad—the bravest among its warriors?"

"Then he will be among the advancing army, surely," cried the young man; "and what

matter if he is not? they will receive his daughter, and I will conduct her to them."

"To whom, Meer Sahib, to whom?" she asked eagerly.

"To the troops of Nizam Ali Khan, who attend the English,—they will be before the city tomorrow."

"Shookr Alla!" cried the woman, lifting up her hands and eyes in ecstasy, "Shookr Alla! O how I bless thee, Meer Sahib, for the news; that will lend her courage, that will make her beauteous eye flash again and her cheek glow; even should her father not be there, there will be a hundred others to whom the daughter of Roostum Ali Beg will be as a daughter. Ya Alla kureem! there is hope, there is hope at last; the day hath long been gloomy, but the evening is bright."

"Rather say the night, sister," said the cook; "let this pass as a hideous dream which hath occupied our senses; let us awake to a bright morning, to share days of happiness with the Khanum, and to pray Alla that his devout Syud may soon be joined to her."

"Ameen!" said the nurse: but Kasim could not speak, his thoughts were too busy.

"I will prepare all," he said, after awhile, "a dooly and bearers shall be ready here; she must go at night. Dare she come here? will she, nurse?—will she speak one word to me ere she leaves us? wilt thou conduct her hither?"

"On my head and eyes be it," said Meeran; "on my head and eyes!"

"Then remember when I send to thee, come quickly; all will be prepared, and I will myself give her over to the leader of the Dakhan troops; if she will go to my mother's, she will become a daughter to her; and I — but no matter, let that be as it is written in our destiny. Go now, ye have tarried long."

Ere they arose to depart, a female figure, which had been seated at the door, drinking in every word of their discourse with greedy ears, arose rapidly, and gliding away to the edge of the verandah, stepped from it into the court-yard, and squatted behind a thick bush of Méhndee which grew there. The joyful pair passed on, and, after allowing a few moments to elapse, she arose and followed them. That woman was Sozun.

* * * * * *

A few nights after, in a small chamber in the house of Kummoo's mother, adjoining the one which we have before mentioned, sat Kummoo and the wretched old woman her accomplice; they spoke in low tones and whispers, and in dread, for the cannon of the English roared without, and was answered in loud peals from the walls of the Fort. The siege had begun now two days; the issue of the night-attack of the 6th of February, and its effect upon the Sultaun's army, causing nearly one half of its number to desert and fly from a service they had long detested, is well known. On the following morning twenty-three thousand were missing, and among them hundreds of the Europeans, upon whom he had placed such reliance; they preferred surrendering themselves into the hands of a generous enemy, to the service of a blood-stained and capricious monster. The rest of the army had retired within the walls, and, faithful to their cause, had determined to defend them to the last.

There was an awful din without: the roar of cannon, the incessant rattle of musketry, the hissing sound of shells as they descended and

burst, came full on the ears of the guilty pair, and the old woman cowered to the ground in fright.

"Knoweth Hoormutbee of this? why is she not here?" she asked, after a long silence.

"She knoweth it, mother," said Kummoo, "but she is a coward—a pitiful coward, and dared not venture forth when shot is flying; but it is late—come—why dost thou delay? thou saidst all was ready."

"But the cannon, daughter—the noise—my heart is appalled."

"Ay, who is the coward now? once thou didst call *me* a coward, Kureena; behold I am now ready. What are the cannon to us? arise and come I say; I see thou hast prepared the figure—come, time passes, and the Khan expects me; he will be returned ere this from the Durbar."

"She will die without it, daughter. Munoo and Shekh Suddoo came to me in my dreams last night," said the hag, "and they told me she would die: this new ceremony is useless."

"I will not believe it. By Alla! thou liest, nurse; she was better, and I—I hate her. Come, here is gold for thee—thou lovest it—come!" And she disengaged a gold ring from

her wrist, and forced it upon the other's, while she seized her arm and dragged her along.

"My blessings on thee, Khanum—the blessings of the old woman who is nigh death!" she said; "this will feed a hundred Fakeers, this will purchase a hundred readings of the Koran for me when I am dead; my blessings on thee, daughter!"

"Come quickly!" cried Kummoo, "come quickly! why tarriest thou—the materials have been ready these many days. Enter now—I follow thee."

She did so, and closed the door.

The room was the one we have before mentioned: a magic figure, of a different form to the first, was drawn on the clay floor—a square, divided into compartments, with figures in each, or marks intended to represent them. The old hag as she entered made three low obeisances to each side of the figure, and, placing herself at the head, began a low monotonous chaunt, which was intended to be a chapter of the Koran read backwards, rocking the while to and fro; it was, in truth, mere unintelligible gibberish. After awhile she untied some earth and ashes from

the corner of her doputta, and pouring water upon them, gradually increased her tone, kneading the mixture into a stiff clay. Soon she changed the incantation into the names of the many demons she had invoked before, and her tones became wilder and wilder as she formed the clay into the rude image of a human being. This done, she rested awhile, mumbling to herself with her eyes shut; and at length, taking from her cloth a number of small pegs of wood, she drove them into the head, the arms, the body, the legs and feet of the image, accompanying each with curses at which even Kummoo shuddered.

"Hast thou the shroud, daughter?" she said as she finished; "behold the image is ready; a bonny image it is—the ashes of a kafir Hindoo, burned at the full moon, the earth of the grave of a woman who died in child-birth—I had much ado to find one—kneaded together. Hast thou the shroud?"

"Here it is, mother."

"Ay, that will do, 'tis like a pretty corpse now. Take it away with thee, fair one, to thy home, to the embraces of thy lord. Mark! in

three days there will be a young corpse in thy house, and remember to call me to the washing —'tis an old woman's business, and I love to look on such. Ha! ha! away! delay not—place it at her door, its head to the east, that she may see it in the morning ere the sun rises —away!"

Kummoo's brain was in a whirl, and she obeyed almost without speaking in reply; she hurried home through the thronged streets, little heeding any one—not even the shot which whistled above—and she reached her abode undiscovered.

For many nights Ameena had not slept so soundly or so refreshingly as on that when the plot intended to cause her death was proceeding to its completion. What if the cannon thundered without—she heard it not, she was secure in Kasim's faith; a day more —nay the next night—she was to leave that roof, she hoped for ever! Meeran had been busily occupied in removing her mistress' jewels to Kasim's house, where a comfortable dooly was already prepared for her, and two

stout poneys for herself and her brother; a few articles of clothing too, and some of the rich garments which the Khan had presented to Ameena in the days of their pleasant intercourse; there were many that she abandoned with a sigh, but it was impossible to take all.

The dreams of the sleeper were fresh and balmy visions: now she thought she wandered through groves, where the rich scent of tuberoses perfumed the air, and the song of birds was sweet to the charmed ear—by fountains, whose murmuring plash mingled with the sighs of the soft wind among the trees above them. Kasim Ali was beside her, pouring forth a tale of love, of devotion, to which she listened with delight and rapture. Again, she was with her mother, her dear mother; and as she lay in her arms and wept tears of joy after their long separation, which were kissed from her cheeks as fast as they trickled over them,—she felt a joy, a sense of security in her soul, which was delicious beyond expression. She fancied her mother spoke to her, and she awoke.

"Alla and the twelve holy Imaums keep thee, this day! my rose of beauty!" said old

Meeran, advancing; and kissing her forehead, she passed her hands over Ameena's head to take the evil from it; "my blessing, and the blessing of holy angels and saints be on thee! how brightly thou didst smile in thy sleep! Alla bless thee, and the lady Muriam, the mother of Jesus! there is no sadness in thy face now."

"None, dear nurse, none. I had such happy dreams, even when you awoke me. I thought, but no matter—" And she hid her face in the pillow.

"Ay, thou wert smiling in thy sleep, fairest, and my heart was glad; art thou strong today? remember it is tonight we go."

Ameena blushed deeply. "I remember," she said, "I am strong, I will meet him."

"Bless thee, my daughter, he is noble, and worthy of thee; now listen and lie here for awhile, it will rest thee; thou shalt rise towards afternoon. I have prepared all yonder, I and my good Zoolfoo. Ya Alla kureem! Ya Moula Ali! Ya Boorhanee Sahib! grant that the issue of this be favourable; now turn thee, fairest, and sleep again: may sweet visions be present to thee, for there is no longer aught to fear."

Meeran left her: she had arisen early, and as she approached the door of her mistress' room, her eye caught the fatally-intended image, which had been laid there; for a moment she was staggered, and her heart failed her, as she remembered its fearful import, but instantly she rallied. "I bless thee, O gracious Alla, that she hath not seen this," she said; "to me it will do no hurt, nor to her, for I will remove it." But at first she hesitated to touch so foul a thing as that which in its corpse-clothes lay before her. "Bismilla hir-ruh man-ir-ruheem!" "in the name of the most clement and merciful!" she cried in very desperation, as seizing the figure at last, and hiding it under her doputta she hurried forth into the open air. "It would be well to lay it at her own door," she thought as she passed near that of Kummoobee; "but no, better to destroy it."

She passed out into the street, the fresh grey dawn was breaking, and only an occasional firing disturbed the silence, except the howling of the dogs, which was dreadful. She looked for a dunghill; there was one not far off, occupied by a dozen dogs snarling at each other, and

quarreling for soft places among the ashes. With a volley of abuse and a few stones they fled, and Meeran proceeded to do her errand. "May all the curses which were said over this image," she cried aloud, "descend upon the authors of it! may they dwell in their bones, their livers, their blood and their flesh, Ameen! Ameen! Ameen!" She then spat on the face of the image, and throwing it on the ground with volleys of abuse, not of the most decent character, she trampled it to atoms under her feet, and pounded them with a stone till not a fragment remained entire; then taking up the dust, she threw it to the four quarters of the heavens; and then, and then only, felt satisfied that the spell was broken. Her return to her happy smiling mistress was the dearest proof she could have obtained that she was right.

* * * * *

"Art thou sure, Sozun?—this is no lie of thine?—thou dost not dream?"

"As I told thee, Jaffar, I heard it with my own ears; as I passed along they entered his house. I had before suspected, and followed them, for I knew the place, and that he would

be at home, and then he said as I have told thee."

"And they have arranged for tonight?"

"Ay! at eight she will be there in his embrace."

"O rare! rare!" cried Jaffar, "the virtuous Kasim! the virtuous Syud! on whom the dancers cast their glances in vain. O rare! rare!" and he laughed heartily, and with a triumphant sound. "What fortune!" he continued, "both at once! both! who have wronged me of money, of credit, of rank. Ya Alla Mousoof! I shall be even with them. At eight, Sozun?"

"At eight. I heard it from Meeran, whom I have dogged these three days. I heard her say it to her brother."

"Good! I will prevent it; now go, fair one, for to me thou art ever fair, Sozun, and beloved—come hither at ten, I shall be alone till morning; there will be confusion in the house, and thou wilt not be missed." And thus saying, he took up his sword and passed forth on his errand.

The Khan was at his post, in a cavalier near the rampart; Jaffar ascended it: the men were working two heavy guns, and some French

officers directed them from time to time; as he mounted the steps a shot was fired.

"Shabash Monseer!" cried the Khan, "well aimed, by Alla! it hit a man yonder—I saw him go down. Ha, Jaffar Sahib, welcome; come and see the sport; stand here; so now, they are preparing another."

"I would speak to thee privately, Khan; descend a few steps, there, we shall be unheard."

"Ha! a message from the Sultaun. Well, I attend thee," and he descended. "Now speak, what is it?"

Jaffar regarded him for an instant, and chuckled; it was the laugh of the devil within him. "Pardon the question," he said, "I would ask after thy house; thy wife is sick, I have heard?"

"Ay, truly; but by my beard I understand thee not, Jaffar; dost thou mock me?"

"No, by Alla! Hath she been really ill? At the point of death?"

He laughed again—but slightly. "They say Kasim Ali Patél saved her life once, Khan Sahib."

"Why dost thou ask? away with thy ribald jokes, Jaffar—I like it not. Thou knowest I will not brook insult, least of all from thee."

"Pah!" said the other, "I mean no insult, I mean well to thee."

"Well?"

"Ay, well! Art thou sure thy wife was ill? was there no pretence? no deception of thee, to gain her own ends?"

"Pretence! deception!"

"Ay—why dost thou repeat my words? Did Kasim Ali ever perform ceremonies for her—for her, thy wife, Ameena?"

"Kasim Ali—for Ameena? Dog! how darest thou name *her* before me?"

"Dog in thy teeth!" cried the other fiercely; I tell thee, old man, I am thy friend, else I would have blood for that word. Khan Sahib, listen: thou art old—thou hast untarnished fame—men love thee—I, whom thou hast sneered at and reviled, love thee—I would not see thee wronged."

"Wronged!"

"Ay, wronged! cannot such things be?—Old men have young wives—what is the con-

sequence? Old man, I say, look to thine house tonight, for one will leave it to return no more."

The Khan gasped for breath, and tottered to the wall of the cavalier, which prevented his falling; he rallied after an instant, and with his sword uplifted rushed upon Jaffar.

"Strike!" said the latter, as he drew himself up proudly, "if thou canst strike one who speaks only for thy good."

"For my good—O Alla!" groaned the Khan, dropping the point of his sword; "messenger of evil! say that thou hast lied, and I will forgive thee—I will bless thee!"

"I cannot; by the holy Kaaba of Mecca I swear it is too true."

"True! blessed Prophet! give me patience; what! of Kasim Ali?—of my son?"

"Ay, and Ameena; thou hast been a dupe, Khan Sahib, as many another. Ha! ha!"

"Do not laugh," said the miserable Khan, "do not laugh—it is mockery to laugh; how didst thou hear this? tell me—I am calm, I can listen."

"No matter how; wilt thou abide the proof? I will accompany thee at the hour."

"Whither?"

"To the Patél's house; darest thou come?"

"Now! now!" shouted the Khan in frenzy, "let me have immediate proof."

"No, no! there has been no harm done yet—there may not be any meant. Wilt thou come with me at night?"

"I will."

"Till then be calm. I may be wrong—I pray Alla I may be, for I honour the Patél; if we are wrong, we will say it is a visit; dost thou agree?"

The Khan was stupified. "What didst thou say?" he asked, "I did not hear thee."

Jaffar repeated his question.

"I will come; thou wilt find me here, Jaffar—here, at my post, like a soldier; if indeed by that time I am — But no matter—if I am alive I will accompany thee."

"Farewell then, Alla keep thee!"

The Khan remained leaning against the cavalier; the shot was whistling around him, but he heard it not; there was no sound in his ears but one, the low but distinct "Ay, and Ameena!" which Jaffar had uttered; he would have given worlds could they have been recalled.

CHAPTER XIII.

"COME, my child! my sweet one, my rose! Now, come! What fear is there?—Thou art closely veiled: all are in consternation, and men and women run hither and thither abroad, making vows and vain prayers that this firing may cease. Come! no one sees us. Zoolfoo waits without to protect thee; he is armed, in case of insult by the way—but of that there is no fear. Come! he expects thee. Even now his heart is burning for thee! why dost thou fear? thou art now strong."

So spoke Meeran, as, when the evening fell, with passionate entreaty she implored her mistress at once to summon courage and accompany her. But the poor girl was greatly agitated; she had several times essayed to move, but had

sunk down again upon the low bed on which she sat, closely muffled in a long white sheet.

"Alla help me! I cannot, nurse—it is impossible. Go—say to him I shall die here—I am content to die!" and she pressed her hand on her heart, in a vain attempt to still its throbbings. "I have no strength to walk; my knees tremble; my heart fails me; there is no hope." And she burst into tears.

They will do her good, thought Meeran; her heart is too full. Awhile she waited; then recollecting that there was cool sherbet without, she ran for it. "Drink!" she said, "drink!—no, that is not enough." For Ameena had but moistened her lips with it—she could not swallow. "Drink! and thou wilt be better. Drink all, and thy heart will cool. So now, Shabash! art thou not better, fairest?"

"I am, dear nurse," said Ameena—"more composed perhaps than before; but it is useless—I cannot go. Hark! the din without is terrible."

"This is folly, my child,—folly. Where is thy courage? Art thou not a Moghul? Many a woman among them has wielded weapons

ere now. What would thy father say if he saw thee? Come—fie on this coward heart of thine! Dost thou not remember when the Mahrattas were upon ye? thou hast often told me thou hadst no fear."

Ameena was much agitated: it was not with fear—she was brave and fearless—but it was shame, an overwhelming sense of modesty, which she imagined she was about to outrage. What if he loved her?—he was a stranger to her, or should have been so; his home was not hers: her fair and precious fame was blasted for ever, should she be seen with him, or be known to have gone to his abode. But Meeran's taunts had roused her a little, for, with all her meekness and gentleness, there was as proud a spirit within her as ever roused to trumpet-call. She arose and made a step: the action was nothing—the effort of her mind was immense.

"Shookr Khoda! Bismilla—ir-ruhman—ir-ruheem!" said Meeran, seizing her arm, and supporting her tottering frame; "come on—quick! quick!—so now lean on me. Holy Alla! how thou tremblest! Remember the curse!—Away from this spot, and thou art free.

Think of that in thy heart, and be firm. 'Tis well—see, the moon even is propitious—she hath veiled her light for an instant. Bismilla! thy destiny has opened brightly; *now* dost thou fear?"

"Not so much—my heart is stiller; but, O nurse, what will he say?"

"He will adore thee, he will love thee, he will pity thee! Come, canst thou not think he burns to meet thee?—that his spirit is with thine now—even now?" As she spoke they passed out through one little court after another, which belonged to the zenana. They went on to a small door which led into the street. Meeran coughed slightly,—the signal was answered. They opened the door and went out. Zoolfoo was there, armed with sword and buckler; only that he was rather too stout, he would have looked quite martial.

"Keep close behind us!" said Meeran; "close—we will lead. When we have entered the Patél's door, go thou round to the other, where the poneys are. All is prepared—is it not?"

"They are there even now," said Zoolfoo, "and the Patél waits. Bismilla! walk fast—I pray for ye as I go."

They hurried on: the open fresh cool air had revived Ameena, and though she still trembled exceedingly, and her heart was in a tumult of conflicting feelings, she suffered herself to be led rather than walked, at as rapid a pace as Meeran thought it possible for one so weak to maintain. Ameena knew the house was near, but moments seemed like hours as they proceeded. There were many people in the streets, hurrying about confusedly, and many forms of shrouded women, like her own, some alone, others in company, walking very fast—soldiers, horsemen and artillery, proceeding to their destinations on and near the walls. Cries, oaths, the rattle and creaking of the artillery-wheels, and, above all, the roar of the cannon resounded in Ameena's ears, and the din and confusion almost stunned her; but Meeran cheered her on, and she felt stronger as she proceeded.

Two persons were watching for her whom she little thought of; they were her husband and Jaffar.

"There!—dost thou see, Khan? dost thou see? They come, by Alla!" the latter whispered.

"Where, Jaffar? where? I see them not. No, I was cheated! they turned off; they cannot be yonder—they would go to the door at once."

The Khan breathed again. He was standing with Jaffar at the corner of a street, nearly opposite Kasim's abode; they were in the deep shadow of a high wall, and could not well be observed. The poor Khan panted and gasped for breath; his soul was on fire; revenge burned there, and suspicion of wrong. Sometimes during the day he thought he would fly to Ameena and implore her forgiveness—implore her to remain—throw himself at her feet and kiss them. Then again his passion arose at the thought that she should have been false—so false to have used so long a deception, as to have estranged him from her—driven him to another. Above all his revenge burned against Kasim Ali; his son he had fondly called him—his adopted—who would have inherited his wealth—he for whom he had been ever anxious. It was a base return to make, to seduce from him the tender being whom he had so long loved. But his thoughts were incoherent—a chaos of

wild passion; he could not reason—he did not attempt it. Proof of their guilt was all he looked for, and often he prayed to Alla that it might not come. There was one spot on which his gaze was steadfast—the angle of the street which led into that where was Kasim's abode. He looked neither right nor left, nor up to the glorious planet that sailed on in her sea of deep azure, but straight on, sometimes clearly, sometimes dimly; and then he would fiercely dash away the tears, which arose unconsciously to his eyes.

"Look! look! Khan," said Jaffar in a hoarse whisper; "again, two figures! and now a man! see! he 's fat— 'tis her brother! And one leads the other on. Oh the vile one, thus to pander to a man—her nose should be cut off! She hesitates, by Alla! the other drags her in—no—she stops—the cook passes on—shall I cut him down?"

"Ameena!" gasped the Khan in a low husky voice, stretching his arms out to her; "Ameena, enter not!—away, home!—pass on!—anything—'tis his door—'tis the Patél's—thou hast no business there! thou hast—She hears not—Ya

Alla kureem! she hath gone in of her own accord, and firmly."

He had only spoken in a hoarse whisper, but he thought he had shouted those broken sentences.

"Art thou satisfied, Khan? am I thy friend now?" said Jaffar in a tone of triumph. "Wilt thou see more?—follow, the door is open; softly, thou shalt see all; thou knowest the place; they will be in the inner room. Come, come! thou mayst yet prevent it."

"Prevent what?" said the Khan abstractedly. He was bewildered; he could hardly speak, his mouth was so parched.

"Come and see! come! we may be late." And Jaffar seized his arm and dragged him across the road; the door was ajar; they entered.

How slowly had sped the dull hours to Kasim Ali that evening! he had prepared all for the reception of Ameena, and had secured one of the posterns which led towards the river, by some of the men of his own risala, who he knew were faithful; they awaited his coming; there was personal danger, but it was nothing in comparison with her safety. There was no firing on that side, for there was no attack; but

few men were there, and he would not be noticed in the confusion. His heart yearned to the poor invalid. Ameena his—under his roof—driven from the Khan by unkindness! he dared not think of what bliss might be hidden from them behind the veil of the future, but which could not follow now. Yet he should see her, should welcome her—speak to her. Oh! it was more than he had ever dared to hope. He was restless and impatient; now he paced his small chamber,—examined a hundred times the dooly which was there, arranged the pillows, and smoothed the soft bedding.

Again he tried to read—absurd! his ear was alive to every sound. At last the door of the court opened gently; he hardly breathed; something white entered—another form—and it was closed carefully. Both advanced towards him; he dared not show himself, lest they should retreat; the figures swam before his eyes. One lingered, but the other urged her on, and spoke cheerily. Still nearer they came—nearer—the foot of one was on the step; she appeared to totter—the woman behind caught her, and called his name; he darted to

her, and, raising the slight form she supported, in his nervous grasp, bore it into the inner apartment, and laid it upon his own soft cushions.

"Ameena! Ameena! speak to me," he murmured in her ear; "mine own, now and for ever! Ameena! look on me. Holy Alla! how thou art changed!"

Her veil had fallen from her face, and her pallid features and hollow eyes met his view; they were shut, and she dared not open them; but his voice was music in her ears, and she sought by no word or gesture to restrain his speech.

"Holy Alla! how thou art changed!—so sunken, so pale; but never heed, thou art safe now—safe for ever. Now thou wilt know no pain or care, for I am to thee even as the tree of the forest to the creeper. Art thou well, fairest? strong enough to proceed? if not, rest here; thou wilt not be missed. I will tend thee—love thee: my whole soul is in thine, fairest! Oh, thou knowest not, Ameena, how I love thee, and have loved thee for years! Alla bless thee! thou art mine own confiding one, and I pray Alla bless thee for having trusted me!"

"Dost thou hear that, Khan?" whispered Jaffar; for they had stolen into the apartment. "Dost thou see?"

The Khan panted hard and quick—so quick that his breath hardly came at times: it was marvellous they heard him not. His hand grasped his sword; he looked through a chink in the door with eyes that glared like a tiger's and were starting from their sockets.

"Dost thou believe now?" said Jaffar again, in a low devilish whisper. "Ha! was I true? Look! he takes her hand—he fondles her! canst thou bear that? art thou a man? The woman is present too—Toba! toba*!"

"This is no time for dalliance," said Meeran. "Arise, Beebee! the dooly is ready. Come, we lose time; thou wilt follow, Patél Sahib?"

"I will. Arise, beloved!" and he raised her to her feet. "Behold I attend thee; yet ere thou goest, one look, I implore thee—one kiss—the first—the last, perhaps, Kasim Ali will ever press on thy beauteous lips; one kind look, to say this presumption is forgiven."

It was granted: the gentle being, as he supported her to the conveyance with his arm

* Shame! Shame!

around her, turned on him a look so full of love from those glorious eyes glistening in lustrous beauty—a look of joy, of love, of gratitude, of passion, blended—that a delicious thrill shot through his frame; he clasped her to his heart; his lips were fastened to hers in a kiss which for the time gave them but one breath, one being; their souls mingled together in that sweet communion.

"Dost thou hear him, Khan?" whispered Jaffar, "Ya Alla! that look of love! and now—"

The demon had done his work. In a phrenzy, like a maddened beast, the Khan dashed through the door, which opened inwards. His sword was naked, and flashed as it was high upraised in his nervous and passionate grasp. A wild shriek burst from Meeran, and she fled.

"Devils!" he shouted in a voice of fury, "Devils! Dog of a Patél! Rhyman Khan hath seen ye!"

The sword was quivering above his head, and it descended blindly, to annihilate, he thought, both at a blow. Kasim Ali stretched forth his arm to stay it; he was too late: the blood of Ameena, who was senseless, gushed forth over

him, and her head fell back upon his bosom. Kasim tried to get at his sword, while he held the lifeless form on his arm; he tore it desperately down from the nail on which it hung above him, expecting another blow momentarily; it came not. His sword was tied to the scabbard, and the knot of the cord would not open; all was the work of an instant; he turned, ready to ward off another blow, and beheld a sight in which horror and pity struggled with revenge for mastery.

The Khan's sword was on the ground, his hands were clasped, his eyes staring and fixed upon Ameena; the sight of blood had calmed his fury.

"Miserable man, what hast thou done?" said Kasim hurriedly.

The Khan could not reply. He rolled his blood-shot eyes upon Kasim, and waving his hand turned and fled.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed a voice he knew to be Jaffar's. He laid Ameena down, and looked at her with dim eyes—she seemed dead.

"I will revenge thee!" he cried, and darted after them.

He saw them pass the small door, close it

violently: and when he had opened it, and dashed on into the open street, he saw them not, but taking the way opposite to theirs, he fled down it at his utmost speed.

A moment after him a woman with breathless haste entered by the same door. "O Alla! grant," she exclaimed, "thou who didst soften my heart, grant I may not be too late. I vow offerings to thee, O holy saint of Sérah! O Mullik Rhyan! if I be in time. Something hath happened; Jaffar and the Khan fled past me. Alla, Alla! how he looked!"

She hurried through the courts, traversed the little verandah, and darted into the room: her sight for an instant failed her; there was a pool of blood on the white musnud, and the lady lay there—her white sheet and long hair dabbled in it. For an instant her heart was sick, but she rallied herself. "If there is only life!—Meeran, Meeran, where art thou? Holy Prophet! *if* there be only life, I vow to be her slave for ever! Lady, dear lady, dost thou hear? Meeran, Meeran, where art thou?"

"Who calls?" said Meeran, advancing terror-stricken from the other door in the court before them.

"It is I, Sozun; haste hither! we may yet save her. Quick! is thy heart so cowardly?"

"How camest thou here, Sozun?"

"No matter, I will tell thee—so raise her up."

"Ya Mousoof Alla! Ya Beebee Muriam! what a gash!" exclaimed both, turning their heads away from the horrid sight for an instant. "But she is warm," said Meeran. "Apostle of Alla! there may be life. Hold her, while I run for my brother—he is without."

He came quickly: for a long time they doubted if she would revive, and her first breath was hailed with a burst of joy.

"I know a secure place," said Sozun; "she is not safe here. She will be discovered by the Khan, and he will kill her."

"Art thou to be trusted, Sozun?" said Meeran; "it was thou who didst cause this murder, and I mistrust thee."

"Alla who sees my heart knows how true it is," said the woman, "and how bitter is my repentance. Ye may leave this poor flower if ye will; but never while Sozun hath life will she depart from her, come weal, come woe." And as she said it she looked up fervently;

and when Meeran saw that her eyes glistened with tears which fell over on her cheeks,—that her features were quivering and her lips moved in silent prayer, then she believed her, and yielded to the necessity of the moment.

Zoolficar, with their assistance, bound up the wound, which had cut deeply into the shoulder and neck, and had bled much, and they now laid the lady in the dooly. Only that she sighed now and then, she would have been thought to be dead; but there was life, and while life was in the nostrils there was hope. The bearers, who had been ready without from the first, were now called; and preceded by Sozun, they went on till they stopped at an obscure house behind the principal bazaar, in an unfrequented part of the Fort. The lady still lived, when they lifted her out of the dooly, and laid her upon as soft and easy a bed as the house afforded.

* * * * * *

Kasim Ali passed a wild and restless night—in comparison of which, that upon the battle-field, when the jackal and hyena had howled around him, was remembered with plea-

sure. He searched every corner of the Fort, every ravelin, every bastion, the most miserable purlieus of the bazaar, which rung with wild shouts of revelry, of drunkenness and debauchery. He went into the thickest and hottest of the fire, where shot and shells and the deadly grape whistled around him. He examined every group of men, but saw neither the Khan nor Jaffar. Twice he returned to his house—once ere he had been long absent, dreading to behold again that beauteous form lying in its blood and disfigured by the gaping wound. It was not there—that misery he thought was spared him by the kind Meeran and her brother. "They have taken it away to bury," he thought; but where he knew not—the morning would reveal. Her blood lay there, clotted upon the white muslin, a horrible evidence of the crime that had been committed. He sought not to remove it; but it reminded him of the state of his own garments, which were saturated. He changed them, and again sallied out.

He returned towards morning, and wrote a few lines to the only other friend he possessed, a Moolah of the mosque in the Fort,

to whom he had willed that his little property should be given, in case of his death and the Khan's, in trust for his mother: they were a few lines only, to tell of his fate; and for the second time he went forth, to seek death in the hot battle.

He found it not, however, all that night; and sick at heart, as the morning broke over the beleaguered city, he entered the court of the mosque, from the tall minarets of which the Muezzin was proclaiming the morning prayer. "It will calm me," he said, "to join in it."

As he entered he met his friend the Moolah. He could not resist the impulse, his spirit was oppressed, and he again requested the Moolah's kind administration of his property in case of his death, and the remission of its proceeds to his mother. Such requests were not uncommon at that period, and death was too busy in the Fort for every man not to prepare for his own end. The Sultaun arrived soon after from his early circuit of the walls, attended by his chief officers, and the morning prayer commenced.

It was finished, and men arose and were

preparing to depart. "Stay!" cried the Sultaun, "we would speak to all." And as he cast his eye around, "Ye all here love me," he said, in so melancholy a tone that most were touched by it. "Ye, Kummur-ud-deen, Syud Sahib, Syud Ghuffoor, Bakir Sahib, and thou Kasim Ali, who once saved me, ye are all here. Alas! there are but few remaining like you. How many have been faithless, who have eaten my salt for years! Listen—our glory is gone—the light of the earth, the star of Islam is quenched. No more triumphs to the Faith—all is dark before us. Hear ye what we have come to: we asked for peace at the hands of the infidels—we asked the cause of this unjustifiable attack—why we were insulted and bearded in our very capital; but no answer is returned. The insatiate thirst of power and conquest is apparent in the reply of the kafir Cornwallis. Listen."

There was perfect silence: every man felt that the Sultaun's spirit was broken, and melancholy was upon every face, as he unfolded a letter, and mounting a step of the pulpit began to read. It was short, and there were few ceremo-

nious expressions: to resign half his territories, to pay the cost of the war, and to surrender his sons as hostages, were the humiliating terms proposed; and as they heard it a burst of indignation arose from the assembly, which rung through the lofty arches and fretted roof of the mosque.

"I thank you, friends and brothers," he said; "ye feel for me—I bless ye, that ye have hearts for the unfortunate. But will you bear this? Will ye, whose victorious arms have ere now vanquished the kafirs, will ye submit to these insults?"

"If all in this fort were as true as we are," cried Syud Ghuffoor, "there would be no fear; but, alas! the faint-hearted tremble for their lives, as every English shot strikes the wall, and there are thousands such."

"Alla be merciful to me!" said the Sultaun, bowing his head; "are they so faithless? What say ye, sirs?"

Many replied, but only a few could answer for the men, and then many wept passionately. The grief of those strong warriors was moving to look on.

"And are we to die here—to die like dogs, like wild beasts in a cage?" broke out the Sultaun frantically, and throwing his turban on the ground; "to have our children torn from us, our wives defiled before our eyes? to be plundered of our kingdom—torn from our throne—humbled in the dust? Are we to bear this from kafirs, from hogs too? Holy Alla, and Mahomed the Apostle, are we to suffer this indignity? are we to be so beaten down? Sirs, have ye no hearts? Where is your vaunted bravery? Ye have eaten my salt, ye have grown rich where ye were poor,—have ye no gratitude, have ye no faith?"

"We have! we have!" cried one and all of that assembly. "We will die at your feet; our lives are in your hand."

"The infidels are before ye—they for whose presence ye have often longed, to prove your prowess. Will ye swear before Alla, and here in his house, to be faithful to me his servant, to your Sultaun?"

Then arose the oaths of all, in hoarse tones, as they waved their arms on high, and swore to be faithful till death.

"'Tis well!" he said, "else ye had been kafirs, fit only to herd with the vile. I bless ye, O my friends. Alla, who sees my aching heart, knows that I believe you true—true to the last—true in prosperity, true now in adversity; while I—I have often deceived ye, often been capricious. Will ye forgive me? I am no Sultaun now, but a poor worm before Alla, meaner than yourselves. Will ye forgive me?"

Then the passionate gestures and exclamations of devotion to him by the enthusiasts knew no bounds; and their wild and frantic cries and expressions of service unto death—to the shedding of their hearts' blood—broke forth without control. Those without, and the soldiery, caught up the wild excitement, thronged into the mosque, and filled the steps and the court, uttering violent exclamations.

"Blessed be Alla! your old fire is still within you," cried Tippoo; "and were I but rid of Cornwallis, that host yonder would disperse like smoke before the sun: we might pursue them to annihilation. Will no one rid me of him? Will no one lead a sortie from the fort, and dashing at his tent, ere he be suspected,

bear him or his head hither? I vow a reward, such as it hath not entered into any one's thoughts to conceive, to him who doeth this: and those who fall ye well know are martyrs, and when they taste of death are translated into paradise, to the seventy virgins and undying youth."

Unknown to each other, and from opposite sides, two men dashed forward eagerly to claim that service of danger. The one was Kasim Ali, the other a man from whose blood-shot eyes and haggard features—upon which anguish and despair were fearfully written—all shrank back as he passed them: it was Rhyman Khan.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Kasim! Kasim Ali! thou art not fit for this service, thou art weak—thy cheek is pale. Go, youth!" cried the Sultaun, "there are a hundred others ready."

"Not so, Light of Islam!" replied the young man. "I was the first—it is my destiny—I claim the service; if it be written that I am to fall this day, the shot would reach me even in thy palace. I am not weak, but strong as ever I was; behold my arm." And he bared it to the elbow; the muscles stood out in bold projections as he clenched his hand. "Behold, I am strong—I am full of power, therefore let it be so; Inshalla! your slave will be fortunate; there is no fear."

" It is *my* right," cried Rhyman Khan. The hollow tone of his voice, as it fell on the Sultaun's ear, caused even him to start. " I was before him, bid me go instead; he is young, and should be spared; the old soldier is ripe for death."

" Prophet of Alla! what ails thee?" said the Sultaun to him. " Why dost thou stare so and roll thine eyes, Rhyman Khan? art thou ill?"

" I am well," he answered, " quite well. Ha! ha! quite well; but as I am thy slave and have eaten thy salt for years, could I hear thy words unmoved? By Alla, no: therefore let me go, it is *my* right, for I am his elder."

Go, both of ye," continued Tippoo; " you have been friends, nay more, father and son; take whom ye will with ye. Go—may Alla shield ye both from danger! Go—if ye fall, your places will be indeed vacant, but your memories will dwell in the hearts of those who love brave deeds, and ye will die as martyrs in the cause of the faith; and this is a death that all covet; but we will pray for your success. Inshalla! victory awaits you, and honour and my

gratitude when ye return. Go! ye have my prayers, and those of every true believer who will behold ye."

Both saluted him profoundly, and then turning, their eyes met. "Come!" said the Khan, "we delay." There was a burst of admiration from the assembly,—a shout which rose and spread abroad to those without. "Who will follow Rhyman Khan?" he cried aloud; "whoever will, let him meet me at the southern gate in half an hour;" and so saying, he hurried rapidly in the direction of his home.

All was confusion there, for the lady Ameena, with Sozun and Meeran, were missing; he ordered his best horse to be prepared for action, and, without speaking, he passed into the apartments of Ameena and fastened the door.

They were as she had left them—nothing had been disturbed: her larks were singing cheerily; her looree, which knew him well, fluttered its bright wings, and screaming tried to fly to him; her gazelle ran up with a merry frisk, and rubbed its nose against his hand, and butted gently with its forehead, gazing at him with its large soft eyes. Her flowers were fresh and

bright, and their odour was sweet in the cool morning air. His eye wandered around: every well-remembered object was there; but she whose joyous smile and sweet tones had made a heaven of the place, where was she? dead and cold he thought, disfigured in death by his own hand. He cast himself frantically on the bed, which remained in disorder even as she had left it, and groaned aloud.

How long he lay there he knew not: he had no thought of present time, only of the past, the blissful past, which floated before his mental vision, a bitter mockery. Some one knocked; it recalled him to his senses.

"They wait," said Daood, "the Patél and a hundred others: he has sent for thee."

"I come," cried the Khan, "I come: it was well he remembered me; he seeks death as I do," he added mentally.

"The lady Kummoo would speak to thee," said a slave, as he passed out.

"Tell her I go to death!" he replied sternly; "tell her I follow Ameena—away!" The girl stared at him as though the words had stunned her, gazed after him as he passed on, saw him

spring quickly into his saddle, and dashing his heels into his noble charger, bound onwards at a desperate speed.

"'Tis well thou art come, Khan," said Kasim Ali, "we have waited for thee."

"Hush! why seekest thou death? thou art not fitted to die, Kasim."

"More fit than thou, old man," was his reply. "Come, they wait—they remark thee; when we are before the judgment thou wilt know all. Come!"

The Khan laughed scornfully, for he remembered the kiss. "Come, my friends," he cried; "follow Rhyman Khan for the faith and for Islam: Bismilla! open the gate."

"For the faith! for Islam!" cried the devoted band as the heavy door opened, and, emerging from the shadow of the gate and wall, the sunlight glanced upon their naked weapons, gay apparel and excited horses, and they dashed in a fearful race toward the camp.

"Show us the tent of the great commander!" cried Kasim to a sentinel who stared at them as they passed, evidently taking them to be a body of the Nizam's horse.

"Yonder!" said the man, pointing to one at some distance.

"Follow Kasim Ali! Follow Rhyman Khan!" were the cries of the leaders, both urging their horses to full speed in reckless emulation. They had been observed however: a staff-officer had watched them from the first, and suspected their intention; now he could not be mistaken; he flew to a picquet of native soldiers, and drew them up across the very path of the rapidly-advancing horsemen. Kasim marked the action, as the muskets obeyed the word of command; he saw the bright sun glance on a line of levelled barrels, and heard the sharp rattle which followed: his horse stumbled; as it fell, he saw the Khan toss his arms wildly into the air and reel in his seat, and the next moment his affrighted charger was flying riderless through the camp! He saw no more, he felt stunned for an instant, and his dead horse lay on his leg—causing exquisite pain; he extricated himself, and tried to rise—his leg failed him, and he fell again to the ground—it was broken. Again he looked around, a number of men and horses lay confusedly together. Some writhing

in pain and crying out for mercy, while the rest of the band were flying confusedly to the Fort.

The Sepoys who had fired ran up, headed by an English officer. Kasim had lost his sword; it lay at a little distance, and he could not recover it. One of the men, seeing that he lived, raised his bayonet as he approached to kill him. He shut his eyes and repeated the Kulma.

"Hold!" cried a voice, "do not kill him—he is an officer; raise him up and disarm him."

"Thou art a prisoner," said the officer to Kasim; "do not resist—art thou wounded?"

"My leg is broken," said Kasim; "kill me, I am not fit to live, I have no desire for life."

"Poor fellow!" said the officer, "he is in great pain. Lift him up, some of ye, and take him to my tent; he is evidently an officer, by his dress and the rich caparisons of his horse."

"Yonder lies my leader!" said Kasim, pointing to the Khan; "raise me, and let me look upon him once more. We were friends in life until yesterday—in death we should not have been divided."

They were touched by his words, and obey-

ed him. The Khan lay on his face, quite dead. They turned the body: Kasim looked upon the familiar features—they were already sharp and livid; there was a small hole in the forehead, from which a few drops of black blood had oozed; his death had been instant as thought. Kasim heeded not the pain he suffered, he felt as though his heart were bursting; and throwing himself beside the body, wept passionately.

After awhile he tried to rise, and they assisted him. "That was a gallant soldier!" he said to the officer; "let him be buried as one, by men of my faith."

"I will answer for it," said a native officer, stepping forward; "thou shalt hear this evening that the rites of our faith have been performed over him. If he was an enemy, yet he was a brother in the faith of Islam."

"Enough! I thank thee, friend," replied Kasim. "Now lead on—I care not whether I live or die, since those I lived for are gone from the earth."

But the officer's curiosity had been excited by his words and his appearance, which was

eminently prepossessing. He was removed gently to his tent, and a bedding laid on the ground. A surgeon, a friend of the officer, was sent for; Kasim's leg was examined; the thigh was badly fractured above the knee, but the operation was skilfully performed, and in a manner which surprised Kasim. It was bound up, and he was soon in comparative ease. How little he had expected such kindness! And when he contrasted it with what would have been an Englishman's fate within the Fort, his heart was softened from the bigotry it had previously entertained.

The officer was Philip Dalton. He had long thought on the possibility of saving some captive, that he might gain information of the English prisoners, and he tended Kasim kindly. In a few days they were better friends; the cold reserve of Kasim had worn off before the frank manner of the Englishman, and they now conversed freely of the war, of their own vicissitudes and adventures, and of the present chances of success. Kasim soon perceived that all hope for the Sultaun was at an end, from the vigour of the attack and the efficiency of the

army, and he knew that within the Fort existed dread and discontent. After awhile Philip asked him of the prisoners—at first warily, and only hinting at their existence. But Kasim was faithful to his Sultaun, though he could have told him of the fearful murders which had been openly mentioned among the army, to avenge which they supposed the English thirsted. Yet he did not reveal them, even though he knew from Philip's own lips that the English had been informed of them by the hundreds who had deserted on the night of the first attack. Often Philip would ask him whether he had ever known any of the prisoners; whether he had ever spoken with them when on guard over them, or perchance escorting them from station to station: for he knew that the captives were frequently removed, lest they should attack those who attended them.

And when Kasim related to him his interference in behalf of an English prisoner at Bangalore, and his attempt to protect him in the Sultaun's Durbar, risking his life for him ere yet he was himself in service, Philip's cheek glowed, and his heart throbbed, in a silent conviction that it was Herbert himself.

"Was he tall, and brown-haired? and had he very large blue eyes?" he asked anxiously.

Kasim recollected himself: it was a long time ago, and his memory appeared to have been impaired by the late events; he had only seen him in times of great excitement. But after a long reflection, he thought it was the same; however, the prisoner's features had made little impression upon him.

"Poor youth!" added Kasim, "I saw him no more."

"How! what became of him?"

"He was doomed to die. While I was held back by men—for I was excited—I saw him dragged away. I heard the Sultaun give the fatal mandate to Jaffar,—a man whose heart is blacker than that of Satan."

"He of whom thou hast told me so much of late?"

"Ay, the same. I heard mention made of the fatal rock, and the young Englishman was dragged forth, spit upon and insulted. Yet even then he spoke to me, and said that my action would be remembered in the judgment. Alas! I had no power to rescue him, and he must have died."

"Gallant fellow!" cried Philip, "the pain of

that thought I can save thee; he died not there."

"How dost thou know? what was he to thee, Sahib?"

"He was dear as a brother to me—he was my friend. I married his sister, after years of absence from my native land. When we took Balapoor, I went to the rock thou knowest of—it was in curiosity only. His name was written there, and that renewed the hope which had never been dead within our hearts; for one of the miserable victims had written, that he had been taken away ill; and by a chance, sent by Providence, we traced him to a worthy Fakeer's Tukea,—thou mayst remember it?"

"I do; a cool shady place, where the wearied wayfarer is ever welcomed."

"The kind old man tended him, administered medicine to him. He recovered, and we heard that he was taken away by that same Jaffar whom thou hast mentioned—whither, he could not tell."

"Alas! then I fear there is no hope of his life. Jaffar is a devil, yet in such a matter he dare not act without the Sultaun's order. I re-

member," he added after a pause, "a conversation between them about an Englishman—it was before the siege; there was no one else present. Tippoo spoke of one who was skilled in fortification, in the arts of war and of gunnery, far above the French adventurers in his service, who after all are but pretenders to science. Could this be thy brother?

"It is! it is!" cried Philip, catching at the idea in desperation; "it must be, he was eminently skilled in all. Your last words determine the idea that it was he. By your soul tell me if you know aught of him."

"Alas no," said the young man. "Yet they concealed nothing: Jaffar said it was useless; that he had sent trusty messengers to him to the fort, through the jungles, at the peril of their lives, with offers of mercy, pardon, wealth, if he would take service in the army. He had spurned all; and then the Sultaun grew furious, and swore he might die there."

"Did he mention the fort, the place where it was, in what direction?" asked Philip eagerly.

"No, and I know not, Sahib; it is not

in this district. If he be still alive, he is in one of those lonely posts away to the west—in Coorg, or on the frontiers of Malabar, a little spot on the top of some lonely peak, piercing the sky, which is ever wrapped in clouds and mists, with its base surrounded by jungles, to traverse which days and weeks are required—garrisoned by the rude and barbarous infidels of the mountains, whose speech and appearance are hardly human. It is a horrible fate to think on, Sahib," he said, shuddering; "better that he should have died long ago. But after all it may not be your friend."

"Perhaps not," said Philip, sighing; "and yet I have hope; and when the fort is stormed, and yon proud Sultaun brought to the reckoning he deserves, it will be hard if we gain not news of him we seek."

"May Alla grant it, Sahib! Thou hast bound me to thee by the kindness thou hast shown a stranger and an enemy, and I will rejoice, even as thou dost, that thy friend and brother should be saved. But, alas! I have little hope. Yet when I recover, and this war is over, if I live I will search for thee and rescue him."

"God bless thee!" cried Philip; "I believe thee. Thou hast now known that we are not the miscreants which the bigots of the faith would represent us to be; and if thou canst bring me even news of his death, it will be a melancholy satisfaction, and will still the restless hopes which have so long gnawed at our hearts and excited us, only to be cast down into utter despair."

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Days passed of constant success on the part of the English: their cannon played night and day upon the breaches, till they were almost practicable. Those in the Fort looked on in sullen despair, and abandoned themselves to a blind reliance on their destiny. It was in vain that Tippoo made the most passionate appeals to them to sally out and cut the English army to pieces; it was in vain he read to them the humiliating demands of the allies; in vain he raved, as he saw the groves of his favourite and beautiful gardens levelled with the earth, and transported to construct fascines and gabions for new parallels and trenches. The sorties were weak, and driven back with loss, and with the remem-

brance of the fatal issue of that led by Rhyman Khan and Kasim Ali, no one dared to hazard a similar attempt, though rewards beyond thought were offered by the frantic monarch. The murmurs within gradually increased, as the breaches widened daily, and men looked to the issue of the storm in fearful dread. Women shrieked in the streets, and men were everywhere seen offering vain sacrifices of sheep and fowls to the senseless idols of the temple, that the firing might cease.

At length it did; the Sultaun in despair yielding to terms of which he could not then estimate the leniency. The firing ceased, and though the maddened English could hardly be restrained from rushing into the fort and searching its most secret apartments and hiding-places for their unhappy countrymen, they were kept back, and the negotiations proceeded.

The event is already matter of history, and we are not historians. Although even his children had gone from him as hostages into the British camp, in a paroxysm of passion the Sultaun desperately refused the cession of Coorg to its rightful owner, whom he had dispossess-

ed—one of the terms of the treaty, but which he well knew, if yielded, would open a road into the heart of his dominions at any time. The stern resolution of the English commander—the presence of his victorious army, the threats of which were openly stated to him by his officers—the general discontent and dread which pervaded all, in spite of his appeals to their pride, their bigotry and their courage—the repair of the breach while the English cannon ceased—all conspired to check their spirit. He sullenly yielded to a destiny he could not avert, and accepting the conditions, he delivered up those captives who were known to be in the fort and province.

With what agonizing apprehension did Philip Dalton and Charles Hayward fly from body to body of these men—some grown aged and careworn from misery and long confinement, while others, having been been forcibly converted to the faith of Islam, now openly abjured its tenets, and flung away their turbans and other emblems of their degraded condition. Alas! Herbert Compton was not among them, nor could any one tell of his fate, though his name was re-

membered vividly; and it was known among them from Bolton, who was dead, that he had not perished at the rock of Hyder.

Now therefore—for the Sultaun again and again protested that he had given up all, and that Herbert had died soon after his escape from the rock—Philip and young Hayward abandoned all hope. True, for awhile they thought that one of the strong-holds of Coorg might contain their poor friend, but there too they were disappointed; and there was no longer a straw floating upon the waters of expectation at which they could catch in desperation; and hope, which had been for years buoyant, sank within them for ever.

The news of the victory reached England; the nation rejoiced at the triumph—that their bitterest enemy in the East had been humbled and despoiled of his fair provinces, and that the political horizon of their already increasing possessions was once more clear. But there were two families among the many who mourned for those who had met a soldier's death, which, though the bereavement was not a present one, yet felt it as acutely as if it

had been recent; nay more so, since their hopes had been so long excited. They knew not that Amy had ever thought there was hope of Herbert's life; but long ere letters came, when it was known that the army was in Mysore, they saw her look for every succeeding dispatch with more and more impatience, and a feverish anxiety she could not conceal. And when the end came, they knew, from her agonized burst of bitter grief, that she too had lingered in hope even as they had.

But Amy's was a strong mind, and one which her affliction, though deep and heavy to bear, had never driven into repining. She looked with earnest hope to the future; and in reliance on the Divine power and wisdom, which she had early practised and which never failed her in her need, she drew from that pure source consolation, which those who loved her most dearly could not impart; she had lived on a life of meek and cheerful piety, almost adored by the neighbourhood, and in sweet intercourse with those around her, whose constant care for her was amply repaid by her devoted affection.

CHAPTER XV.

The Sultaun was not humbled by the issue of the campaign, though for a time his resources were straightened. On the contrary, he burned with revenge for the indignity which he had suffered, superadded to the fierce hate for the English which he had ever retained, and which arose now in a degree of ferocity he could hardly restrain. The demand of three millions and a half sterling made for the expenses of the war—for which, and the relinquishment of the territory he had agreed to resign, his children were held as hostages—he met partly by a payment from his own treasury, partly by a demand upon his army and his civil officers, and the residue was directed to be raised in the provinces,

where means were employed for the purpose at which humanity shudders. Mild as had been his civil administration previously, and flourishing as was the cultivation of his whole country under the admirable administration of Purneah, his finance minister—often in marked contrast to the desolation of the English provinces, where the rule of Englishmen was not understood, nor their information as yet equal to the complexity of revenue affairs—there now ensued a remarkable contrast. As the oppression and forced contribution proceeded with horrible rigour, thousands fled into the English possessions, where they were received and protected; and this, while it did not check the infatuated persecution of many of his people, in whose welfare lay his own safety, added fresh cause for his hatred of those from whose protecting sway he could not withdraw them.

Meanwhile his restless mind embraced every subject which came, or which he fancied could come, within his grasp; astrology and magic, with all their absurd and debasing rites, were studied with greater avidity and attention than ever under the guidance of some who had pre-

tensions to those sciences, both Brahmins and Mahomedans. From them he drew the most magnificent auguries of his future brilliant destiny; the past, he said, was but a cloud which, as he had ascertained from the stars, had hung over him from his birth ; it was now dissipated, melted into thin air before the bright beams of the rising sun of his destiny. Physic, too, absorbed his attention; to perfection in which he made vast pretensions by aid of a thermometer, the true use of which he declared he had discovered by a revelation from the angel Gabriel, with whom he seemed to have established in his dreams a perfect confidence. It is only necessary, he would say, for a sick man to hold the bulb in his hand, and then, as the mercury rose or fell, so was the disease hot or cold; and according to its scale of progression, so should the remedies, differing in potency, be applied. Often he would, in his caprice, remark upon the altered look of any one present in his court; and in spite of their protestations of perfect health, apply the test, and administer a remedy upon

the spot, which it would have been death almost to refuse.

The news of the revolutionary movement of 1789–90 in France, also, for which he had been gradually prepared by the adventurers in his service, infected him with a restless desire of imitation, which ran into the most ludicrous and often mischievous channels. As the French names of years and months were altered, so were his. A new era was instituted; and this being in direct opposition to the precepts of the Koran, which direct an implicit observance of them, he had recourse to his dreams and visions once more, by which it was for the while established.

In all departments of finance, of the army, of agriculture, of justice, there were perpetual alterations, sometimes undoubtedly with good effect, at others the most puerile and absurd. Words of command, invented from the Persian language, were given to his army, and new orders for their regulation and discipline constantly promulgated. He contemplated a fleet to exterminate the English one; which, having before

defeated the French, had prevented them from sending such succour to his aid as he had expected. One hundred ships of immense force was to be the complement: of these, forty were directed to be commenced at Tellicherry, Mangalore, and his other ports on the western coast; and officers were appointed to them, commanders and admirals, who had never even seen the sea, had no conception what a ship was, save from the descriptions of others. Some of these men were sent to superintend their completion, others retained at court for instruction in the science of navigation and naval warfare; in which, as in his military pretensions, his dreams, visions, and assumed revelations, alone assisted him.

He was merchant and money-lender by turns; and huge warehouses, which still exist in the fort of Seringapatam, long open rooms in the palace capable of containing vast quantities of merchandise, were filled with every description of goods, which in time he forgot entirely, and so they remained till his death. By his system of banking, and of regulating, as he imagined, in his own person the exchanges of his dominions, he put a stop to the operations of the bankers

of his capital, by whose assistance alone he was able to administer his affairs; nor would they resume their business, until he agreed to abandon this one of the thousand schemes which were on foot for fame and aggrandizement.

New and perplexing laws were for ever being coined in the fertile mint of his own brain; new interpretations of the Koran, which he pretended to receive by inspiration, when in reality he understood not a word of its language, and very indifferently Persian, in which the commentaries upon it were written. The penal enactments against the lower classes of his Hindoo subjects were horrible: the meanest offences, the wearing of any scrap of green, the sacred colour of Mahomed, about their persons, or the transgression of any one of his arbitrary rules, was punished with death, or obscene mutilations, to which death would have been far preferable. These were often done in his own presence; and with Jaffar Sahib, Madar (who had once been his servant, but who had risen in rank,) and many others, he was at no loss for instruments to carry them into execution. He would call himself the Tiger

of the Faith—the beloved friend of Mahomed; and while he arrogated to himself the last title, the impiety of which shocked the religious among his officers, he acted up to the first not only in words, but in deeds, such as we have alluded to cursorily, by dressing his infantry in cotton jackets printed in tiger's stripes,—by sitting on the effigy of one for a throne, and by having two large ones chained in the court-yard of his palace, who were often made the executioners of his terrible will.

Many are the tales too, even now very current in the country, of the ludicrous effects of his inspirations regarding particular people, whom, for some fancied lucky termination or commencement of their name, or some meaning he chose to attach to it, a fortunate horoscope, or even from lucky personal marks, he would select from the meanest ranks, to fill offices for which they were alike unfitted by education, talents or acquirements, and who, when their incapacity was detected, were mercilessly disgraced. It has been said of him by an eminent historian*, whose account of the period is

* Wilks.

a vivid romance from first to last, that "his were the pranks of a monkey, with the abominations of a monster;" and indeed it is impossible to give an idea of his character in juster terms.

Kasim Ali was again with him, and, rewarded for his exertions on the day we have mentioned, had risen to a high rank among his officers. Unable to walk when the army broke up from before Seringapatam, Philip Dalton had persuaded him to travel by the easy stages at which the army proceeded, as well for the change which his weakened condition required, as for the continued attendance of the English surgeon under whose care he was placed. To this he had agreed, for in truth the representations of the noble-hearted Englishman had set many matters before him in a new light, and he now looked upon acts of the Sultaun with abhorrence which he had before considered as justifiable, nay meritorious, when exercised upon infidels, whether Hindoos or English; and having accompanied Philip to Bangalore, he parted from him there with regret, and with a strong sense of his kind and

generous behaviour, promising that should he ever discover any clue to the fate of poor Herbert, he would write; for the nations being now on good terms, the communications were open, and he could do so with safety.

For a long while, however, he was unfit to move; he made a report of his escape to the Sultaun, and receiving in return an honorary dress for his gallant behaviour, he was assured that his rank remained to him—nay, was increased; and having solicited leave of absence, he returned to his village, to regain, in its quiet seclusion, the strength and peace of mind he had lost. Of Ameena he never thought but as one dead; for though he had written to his friend the Moola to endeavour to trace her fate, and to discover where she had been buried, in order that he might have the melancholy satisfaction of erecting a tomb over her remains, yet she could not be traced, nor her attendants, who were supposed to have escaped to the Nizam's army in the confusion which ensued after the siege, and her body to have been buried in some obscure place during the night on which she had been cut down. The Moola wrote word that

the matter was not known, except perhaps to a few of the Khan's servants, who had not divulged it.

Kasim found, too, that he had been declared heir to most of the Khan's wealth, which was large; there was a handsome provision made for his two wives, besides their dower upon marriage, and it was said their families were satisfied at the will, which, regularly drawn up, had been deposited long before his death with responsible executors. In it a large sum was assigned to Ameena; but as she did not appear, it was kept in trust for her should it ever be claimed. Hoormut, the elder wife, had gone to her relations, at some distance from the city; and it was said that Kummoo, whose beauty was much spoken of, had been transferred to the Sultaun's zenana, the laxity of the morality of which would, Kasim thought, exactly suit her.

Kasim was thus raised to a handsome independence of station, and he spared no pains to make his mother's declining years as happy as was possible. A new and handsome abode was erected for her; his village walls were rebuilt,

and strengthened against perhaps troublous times to come. A new mosque was built; and a neat serai, near the soldiers' tomb, marked the spot in which he had rescued Ameena. This was his favourite resort, where of an evening, spreading a carpet beneath the trees, he would remain, in conversation with those he loved and respected, the elders of his village, both Hindoo and Mahomedan, or else in silent and sad thought on the past,—on the happiness which had been so rudely dashed from his lips. His health continued very indifferent, and from time to time his leave of absence was renewed; however at length he could delay no longer, and he once more resumed his attendance at the court of the Sultaun.

It was not, however, with the same feelings of indifference that he now regarded the monstrous acts of the Sultaun; his mind had been purged from the dross of bigotry by his residence in the English camp, where, besides Philip Dalton's society, there were many others who, either out of curiosity or to while away a tedious hour of ennui, would come to the pallet-side of the Jemadar, and listen to his conversa-

tion; relating in turn tales of their own green land, which to Kasim's senses appeared a paradise. Jaffar Sahib was an offence in his sight; and his increased favour with the Sultaun, his constant attendance on his person and at the Durbar, his now fearful reputation, and the memory of the past (for Kasim felt sure he was connected with that fatal night and Ameena's death), as well as the fate of the young Englishmen,—all caused a total revulsion of feeling towards the monarch, and he felt his situation becoming daily more distasteful to him, in spite of the splendid prospects which were undoubtedly in the distance. Kasim, too, was a good Mussulman; he was regular in his prayers, and hated innovations; and the endless capricious changes, the blasphemous conduct of the Sultaun, and his pretensions to supernatural power—his devotion to unholy and magical rites, which were openly mentioned, and above all his acts of cruelty and tyranny—determined him, and some others of his own character, to abandon a service in which their high notions of justice, decency, and piety were daily outraged.

By the partition-treaty, also, the territory in which were situated the villages of Kasim Ali had been transferred to the Nizam, and he at last found it impossible to serve two masters. As long as he remained at home, the authorities dreaded him, and were quiet; but after a time a system of annoyance commenced, of which he had such frequent accounts, that he was soon left no resource between selling his patrimony and cleaving for ever to the ruler of Mysore, or abandoning his service and retiring into seclusion. Had the Sultaun's conduct not shocked him by its levity and brutality, he might have sold his villages, and withdrawn his family into Mysore; but he shrunk from that, and, having converted his property into bills on Hyderabad, Adoni, or other towns which were readily negotiable in the district he belonged to, he prepared himself for a journey, and formally tendered his resignation to the Sultaun in open Durbar.

There were many of his friends who had advised him to ask for leave, and write his intention of not returning from his own home; but he thought this a cowardly manner of proceed-

ing, and determined that his memory should not be reproached with cowardice, and that it should remain as it stood, high among those who were honoured in the army. At an evening Durbar, therefore, when all were present, and many eyes fixed on him (for his resolution was known) he arose, stepped forward, and having made the tusleemât, said to the Sultaun,

"Your slave would make a petition, if he is permitted?"

"Surely," said the Sultaun; "what did Kasim Ali ever say that was not welcome?"

"My lord," he began, "it is hard for one who hath received benefits at thy hands, and who in a bright prospect before him—the glorious career of the lion of the faith—seeth no end but advancement, to shut it out from his sight, and to deny himself the pleasure of seeing day by day the Light of Islam—the Lion of the Faith. O Sultaun! be merciful to thy servant, and forgive the request he makes, that he may retire from thy service into the obscurity and quiet he has long coveted. It is well known to all this assembly, that thy slave is

one to whom the stirring events of life have no charm—the intrigues, the factions, the wavering politics of a court, no attraction. If I have hitherto preserved my place here, it has been by kindness and forbearance, not by merit. Another far more fitted than I am will succeed me, and I shall be content in the administration of my property, which, distant as it is, requires my constant attention and care."

Tippoo stared at him, and Kasim felt uncomfortable; he could not remember that any one had ever made such a request before, and he could not foresee the result. Yet the Sultaun had been in good humour all the day, and he hoped for the best.

"What do I hear, Kasim Ali—that thou wouldst leave my service?"

"Even so, Huzrut! When thou wast in peril of thy life, mine was risked freely, though others hung back. I, and he that is gone—may his memory live in honour!—led those into the English camp who might have ended the war, had Alla so willed it. In adversity I stood by thee, and I have not quitted thee since, for these six years. Thou art now pros-

perous: the French are thy friends; thou art courted by the nations of Hind; thou art at peace with the English,—long may this continue—thou art prosperous everywhere; and now when all is fair and bright around thee, I would in the season of joy take my leave, grateful for a thousand benefactions from the liberal hand of him who has not ceased to uphold me since I was a youth."

"Thou art joking, Kasim Ali," said Tippoo; "and yet thou hast a serious face. By your soul, say this is not meant!"

"It is in very truth, O prince! I have long meditated it. I waited only till my lord's mind was happy and free from care to announce it, for I would not have my memory linked with painful recollections, but with pleasant thoughts."

The Sultaun's brow darkened. "Thou art considerate, young man!" he said bitterly. "When I was happy and merry in my heart, thou must needs mar all by this news. By Alla! I would rather thou hadst told it when the storm within me was at the highest; but no matter; thou hast served us well and faith-

fully—we shall long remember it; nor would we detain any one against his will. We have (blessed be the Prophet!) hundreds in our valiant army to fill vacant places. Therefore go—thou hast thy leave. Yet thou shalt not have it to say I was churlish in this; thou art dismissed with honour. Bring hither two shawls, a turban, and an ornament for the head—also a noble horse from my stables, and a sword and shield from the private armoury," he cried to an attendant. "Ye shall see, sirs, how Tippoo estimates greatness, and how he rewards it."

Kasim was much moved: he had expected a stormy scene, an absolute refusal; he had prepared himself for it, and for flight if necessary; now he could have cried like a child; all the Sultaun's caprice, cruelty and impiety were forgotten. There sate before him the benefactor and the steady friend of years. He continued gazing on him, and often he felt the tears rush to his eyes, as though they would have had vent. The attendant entered with a tray; upon it were a pair of magnificent shawls of Cashmere, a superb mundeel, and a jewel of great value for the forehead. The Sultaun examined them

with the air of a merchant. "They are a handsome pair, and worthy of him," he said; "and this too is rich, and the diamonds of good water. Approach, Kasim Ali!"

He obeyed: the Sultaun arose, cast over his shoulders the rich shawls, took the turban and jewel from the tray, and presented him with them. "Embrace me," he said—"I love thee: I shall ever remember thee gratefully, Kasim Ali; and thou wilt not forget the poor servant of Alla, Tippoo Sultaun: should his enemies revile him, there will be one whose tongue will speak his praise. Shouldst thou ever feel disposed to return, thy place is open to thee; or if as a guest, thou art ever welcome. Go—may Alla keep thee!"

"Never will I forget thee, O benefactor!" cried Kasim, completely overcome; "never will I allow a word to be said against thee; and in my home—in the wide world—wherever I go, men shall know of the generosity of the lion of Mysore. I go—my prayers are for thee and thy prosperity night and day."

Kasim made low obeisances as he passed out of the audience-hall; he cast a last look round

the well-known place; what scenes he had witnessed there of joy and misery, frantic enthusiasm and fierce bigotry, torture, and even death! Dreams, visions, lewd and vile torrents of abuse against the English; poems, letters of war, of intrigue, of policy, of every conceivable kind. Enough! they were gone for ever, and he was glad that the feverish existence was at an end; henceforth before him was the peaceful and quiet existence he had so long coveted.

The horse, richly caparisoned, stood at the palace-gate, and men bearing the sword and shield. Kasim bounded into the saddle, and before the admiring spectators, many of them his kind friends, caused him to curvet and bound to show how perfectly the animal was trained; and then saluting them he rode on. Next morning he was on his way beyond the Fort.

That night Jaffar was alone with the Sultaun; they had conversed long on various matters. At last Jaffar exclaimed, "May I be your sacrifice! it was wrong to let Kasim Ali go."

"Why?" said Tippoo.

"He knows too much," was the reply.

"But he is faithful, Jaffar?"

The fellow laughed. "He is a good friend to the English."

"To the English?"

"Ay! remember how often he has spoken in their favour, how often he hath bearded others who reviled them. May I be your sacrifice! he is unfaithful, or why should he leave thee?"

The Sultaun was struck by the remark. "If I thought so," he said quickly.

"Why should he for months have been collecting his money?" continued Jaffar; "every rupee he could collect has gone to Hyderabad, —bills, hoondees, gold,—all except what he has with him; he has ground the uttermost couree from those who owed him anything."

"Is this true?"

"Ay, by your head! shall I bring the Sahoukars who gave them?"

"Ya Alla!" cried the Sultaun, "what a serpent have I been nourishing! Thou saidst to Hyderabad?"

"Ay, he will go to Sikundur Jah, and fill his ears with tales of thee for the English, and give them a plan of this fort. Was he not always with the engineers?"

"Enough, good fellow," said the Sultaun sternly; "he must not reach the city—dost thou understand?"

"I will not lose a moment; the men will have to travel fast, but they can overtake him."

"Will they dare attack him? methinks there are few who would attempt that, even among thy devils."

"There are some of them who would attack hell itself and its king Satan," said the man with a grin, "when they have had bhang enough; trust me, it shall be done. He escaped me once," said Jaffar, as he went out; "he will be lucky if he does so again; we shall be even at last."

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Kasim Ali rode on gaily; with him were a number of men who had previously obtained leave of absence, and had staid for the advantage of his society and safe conduct, for he was respected by all. They were proceeding, some on horseback, others on poneys, to various parts of the north of Mysore; some to his own district, some to Hyderabad. The road was light under their horses' feet, and coss after

coss passed almost without their knowledge, as they conversed freely and merrily together. At the point where the river Madoor crosses the road to Bangalore there is a good deal of thick jungle, but they heeded not the pass, though it was noted for robbers; they were too formidable a party to be attacked. As they proceeded carelessly, a shot whistled from among some bushes to the left—it went harmless; another, and Kasim felt a sting in his left arm, and he saw a man fall.

"Upon them!" he cried, drawing his sword; "upon the sons of defiled mothers!" and he dashed into the jungle, followed by the best mounted; ten or twelve men were flying at their utmost speed—but they had a poor chance before those determined horsemen. Kasim cut at two as he passed them; they were not killed but badly wounded; three others were dispatched.

"I know that rascal's face," said one of his companions, as the prisoners were brought up; "it is one of Jaffar's devils."

"Ay, and this is another," said Kasim; "he was in the Durbar yesterday morning."

"Tell us why thou hast done this," he said; "why didst thou attack me? what have I ever done to harm thee?"

"Nothing," said one sullenly; "it was the Sultaun's order."

"Thou liest!" cried Kasim, striking him.

"Do not beat me," he replied; "but behold, here is the order to give us horses to overtake thee, shouldst thou have gone on. We knew not that thou hadst tarried in the city last night; we arose and came on to the last village; they told us there thou hadst not passed, and we waited for thee. Behold! this is the Sultaun's seal."

It was truly so—his private seal: Kasim well knew it; he shuddered as he looked on it. "Why should have there been such black treachery?"

"Go!" said he to the man, recollecting himself, "thou art but the instrument of others; go—may Alla give thee a better heart! Tell thy master I recognise his work; and bid him say to the Sultaun, or say it thyself—the love that was between us is broken for ever. Go!"

"Let us press on, my friends," said Kasim,

"not by the road, but by bye-paths. Though I know not what vengeance I have provoked, ye see I am not safe."

They did so, and it was well that they travelled fast, for the baffled tiger raved at the loss of his prey, and many men pursued Kasim and his companions, but in vain.

CHAPTER XVI.

The morning of the twenty-sixth of April, 1798, was a scene of universal excitement in the fort of Seringapatam. As the day advanced, crowds of men collected in the great square before the palace; soldiers in their gayest costumes, horsemen, and caparisoned elephants, which always waited upon the Sultaun and his officers. The roofs of the houses around, those of the palace particularly, the old temples, and the flat terraces of its courts and dhurrumsalas, even the trees were crowded with human beings, on the gay colours of whose dresses a brighter sun had never shone. There arose from the mighty mass of garrulous beings a vast hubbub of sounds, increased by the Sul-

taun's loud kettle-drums, the martial music of the band of a French regiment, the shrill blasts of the collery horns, neighings of horses and trumpetings of elephants, as they were urged hither and thither.

No one in this soberly-dressed land can have an idea of the gorgeous appearance of these spectacles; for an eastern crowd, from the endless variety of its bright colours, and the picturesqueness and grace of its costumes, — its gaily caparisoned horses, elephants and camels, —is of all others in the world the most beautiful and impressive.

In the centre of the square was an open space, kept by French soldiers; in the middle of this stood a small tree, which had been uprooted and planted there; but already its leaves had faded and drooped. It was covered with gay ribbons of all colours and of gold and silver tissue, which fluttered in the fresh breeze and glittered in the sun: this was surmounted by a spear, on which was the red cap of liberty, the fearful emblem of the French revolution.

Around it were many French officers, some

dressed fantastically and crowned with wreaths of green leaves, others in brilliant uniforms, their plumes and feathers waving. Many of them spoke with excited gestures from time to time, and swore round oaths at the Sultaun's delay; for the sun had climbed high into the heaven, and no shade was there to save them from its now scorching beams.

The amicable issue of the embassy to Paris, sent by Tippoo in 1788, had been exaggerated by the envoys to enhance their consequence; and the French officers in his service had by every possible means in their power kept this feeling alive. When the revolution broke out, the roar of which faintly reached the Sultaun of Mysore, it was represented to him by those of the French nation who were there, in such terms of extravagant eulogium, while its bloody cruelties were concealed, or, if mentioned, declared to be acts of retributive justice, that the Sultaun's mind, itself a restless chaos of crude ideas of perpetual changes and progression, eagerly caught at the frenzied notions of liberty which the Frenchmen preached. At the same time it is almost impossible to conceive

how an Asiatic monarch born to despotism could have endured such an anomaly as his position presents—one who with the most petty jealousy and suspicion resisted any restriction of, or interference with, his absolute will and direction of all affairs, even to the most minute and unimportant of his government, whether civil or military.

From time to time, allured by the certainty of good pay in his army, many needy adventurers came to him from the Isle of France, who were entertained at once, and assumed, if they did not possess it, a knowledge of military affairs. These kept up a constant correspondence with their parent country; and willing to humour the Sultaun, while indulging their own spleen, they poured into his ready ear the most virulent abuse of the English, and constant false statements of their losses by sea and land; while the accounts of French superiority and French victory were related in tones of exaggerated triumph.

Ripaud, an adventurer with more pretension and address than others, having arrived at Mangalore, and discerning the bent of the court

from Tippoo's authorities there, represented himself to be an envoy from the French republic, and was invited at once to the capital. It may well be supposed that he did not underrate his own assumed influence, nor the immense advantages of an embassy in return; and one was sent by Tippoo, which, meeting with various adventures by the way, returned at last, not with the mighty force he had been led to expect, but with a few needy officers, the chief of whom was Chapuis, men who determined to raise for themselves at his court a power equal to that of Perron at the court of Sindia, and of Raymond at that of the Nizam.

This was a feverish period for India, when those two mighty nations, England and France, were striving for supremacy. True, the power of the English was immeasurably more concentrated and effective, and their resolute and steady valour more highly appreciated than the brilliant but eccentric character of the French. Still, however, the latter power had increased extraordinarily since the last war with Tippoo; and 45,000 men at Sindia's court, over whom Perron held absolute sway, and 14,000 under Raymond

at Hyderabad, were pledged by their leaders to aggrandize the power of their nation, and to disseminate the principles of the revolution.

Chapuis had laboured hard to effect his object; a man of talent and quick-witted, he had at once assumed a mental superiority over the Sultaun, which he maintained. He had flattered, cajoled and threatened by turns; he had written to the French government in his behalf—he had promised unlimited supplies of men and ammunition—he had bewildered the Sultaun's mind with the sophistries of the revolution, with vague notions of liberty, equality, and the happiness which was to follow upon the earth from the adoption of these principles by all ranks—he had told him of the rapid rise of Buonaparte, of his magnificent victories, and inflamed him with visions of conquest even more vast than those of the French general.

The French expedition to Egypt became known, their successes and their subjugation of the country. That seemed but the stepping-stone to greater achievements. Alexander with a few Greeks had penetrated into India and had sub-

dued all in his path. Buonaparte, with his victorious armies, far outnumbering the Greeks, was at a point from whence he could make an immediate descent upon Bombay; then would Perron lead Sindia into his alliance—Raymond, the Nizam. The Mahrattas, a wavering power, would side with the strongest. Zeman Shah and his hardy Afghans had already promised cooperation, so had the Rajpoots, and the men of Delhi and those of Nipal; last of all Tippoo himself, who had single-handed already met and defeated the English in the field. All were to join in one crusade against the infidel, the detested English, and expel them for ever from India. It is no wonder that the wild and restless ambition of the Sultaun was excited, his intrigues more and more frequent, and, as success seemingly lay within his grasp, that he himself was more open and unguarded.

"Join but our society," Chapuis would say to him, "you league yourself with us,—you identify yourself with the French republic,—its interests become yours,—your welfare its most anxious care. You become the friend, the brother of Buonaparte, and at once attach him to

you by a bond which no vicissitudes can dissever."

And he yielded, though with dread, for he knew not the meaning of the wild ceremony they proposed, of destroying the symbols of royalty, and reducing himself to a level with the meanest of his subjects; it was a thing abhorrent to his nature, one which he dared not disclose even to his intimates, but to which he yielded, drawn on by the blindest ambition that ever urged a human being to destruction.

The Frenchmen had long waited; at length there arose a shout, and the kettle-drums and loud nagaras from the palace proclaimed that the Sultaun was advancing. He approached slowly, dressed in the plainest clothes; no jewel was in his turban, only his rosary around his neck, a string of pearls without price, for each bead had been exchanged for another when one more valuable could be purchased. A lane was formed through the crowd, and his slaves, headed by Jaffar, his confidential officer, preceded him, forcing the people back by rude blows of their sheathed sabres, and shouting his titles in extravagant terms.

All hailed the spectacle as one to exult in, though they could not understand it; but to the Sultaun it was one of bitter humiliation, his feelings at which he could hardly repress. He passed on, the crowd making reverence to him as he moved; he did not return their salutation, his eyes were downcast, and he bit his lips almost till the blood came. Before him was the place where he was going to a moral death—to abjure his power over men—to allow himself to be on equality with the meanest, to hold authority over them, not of inherent right, but by their sufferance. Had any one known his intention, and spoken one word to him in remonstrance, he would have turned; but the men were before him to whom he had sworn obedience, and he proceeded. Chapuis advanced, he saw his agitation, and in a few hurried words implored him to be firm, reminding him of the issue at stake, and this rallied him.

He led him to the tree; there was an altar beneath, as if for sacrifice; a small fire burned on it, and its thin blue smoke rose among the branches, and melted away into air; a perfume was thrown from time to time into the flame,

which spread itself abroad as the smoke was dissipated.

Chapuis and some others officiated as priests of the mysteries, and they knelt before the altar, while one made a passionate invocation to liberty, which another tried in vain to explain to the Sultaun. It was finished: they arose, and Chapuis advanced toward him. "Hast thou the emblems?" he said.

The Sultaun took them from an attendant, the feather of gold tinsel he always wore in his turban, and an ornament of trifling value for the head.

"These are all," he said; "be quick."

"They will be nothing without your highness's own turban," replied Chapuis; "placed in that, your people will understand the ceremony; otherwise it is vain. Your highness remembers your promise and mine. I have performed mine; see that thou, O Sultaun, dost not fail!"

The others echoed his words, and urged the Sultaun to obey.

Hesitating and almost trembling, he did so. "They will not understand," he said to himself, "they cannot comprehend this mummery;

they cannot hear what the Frenchmen say, much less understand their broken language."

He took the turban from his brows, and gave it into Chapuis' hand. The officer placed in it the tinsel feather, and threw it contemptuously into the fire. An attendant raised and unfurled a scarlet chuttree, or umbrella, over the monarch's head: that too was remarked.

"It must follow," said Chapuis to him; "that is a regal emblem,—there must be none left of the abomination." He caught it from the attendant and flung it on the fire.

There arose a deep murmur of indignation from the multitude to see their monarch's turban taken from his head and burned; to see his chuttree forcibly taken and destroyed was more than they could bear without an expression of excitement, and cries of indignation rent the air.

"To hell with the Feringhees!—cut them down!—what impiety is this? what insult to the Sultaun?" And many drew their swords and raised them on high to strike. The Frenchmen were in imminent peril, but they were firm.

It was a grand and striking scene—that ex-

cited crowd—those fierce gestures—gleaming weapons—and those hoarse shouts and threats. In the centre, the group on which all eyes were fixed, the bare-headed Sultaun, and those few needy adventurers, reckless and unprincipled, who had gained a mastery over one whose smallest gesture would have caused their instant annihilation.

"Peace!" he cried, raising his arm; "it is our will—it is decreed." The multitude was hushed, but many a muttered threat was spoken, many a prayer for the dire omen to be averted, many an expression of pity for the position of one whom all feared and many even venerated.

And truly, to see that degradation done to one who knew not its meaning, who, bare-headed before his people, and under a fierce sun, stood and looked on at the destruction of the emblems of his power — might have caused pity for his condition; but it did not in those who stood around him; the act sealed their own power—they had no thought of pity.

As the last fragments burned to ashes in the blaze of the fire, Chapuis lowered the spear

on which was the cap, and presented it to the monarch. "Wear it!" he said, "consecrated as it is in the smoke of those emblems which are destroyed for ever; wear it—an earnest of the victories thou wilt gain."

The Sultaun put it on. Chapuis seized a tricoloured flag which an officer bore near him, and waved it above his head. It was the signal agreed on: the artillerymen were at their posts on the ramparts, and the roar of two thousand and three hundred cannon proclaimed that Tippoo, the Light of the Faith, the Lion of Islam, the Sultaun of Mysore, was now citizen Tippoo of the French Republic, one and indivisible.

Then followed the coarse salutations of the French soldiery, who, excited by liquor and by the event, rushed around the Sultaun, and seized his hand, shaking it in rude familiarity; his cup of humiliation was full, and he returned to his palace in bitter mortification and anger. There were many of his officers who, deeply touched by the mockery of the exhibition, remonstrated with him, and advised him to revoke the act by a solemn scene in the mosque, attended by all his army and the high religious functionaries.

But it was impossible to arouse him to the act—to shake off the domination to which he had subjected himself; and while it was whispered abroad that the Sultaun had become a Feringhee, those who wished well to his cause saw that he had with his own hands struck a vital blow at its interests.

It was happy for the British cause in India that a nobleman was appointed to the responsible station of Governor-General, who, from the moment he undertook the office, and during his passage out to India, bent his whole mind to the complete investigation of the politics of the country he came to govern. He was happy in having those with him who could afford him an insight into the designs and wishes of the native princes, and there is no doubt that Lord Mornington resolved to act upon many suggestions he received even before he arrived. To the intrigues of the Sultaun his notice had been particularly attracted, and the designs of the French were too obvious to be unnoticed for a moment. By a chain of events, which are points of history, the Sultaun's intrigues with the French government of the Mauritius became known; the

proclamations of its governor were received at Calcutta, and though doubted at first, from the continued expressions of friendship made by the Sultaun, yet their authenticity was established beyond a doubt by subsequent inquiries.

After the scene in the fort which we have mentioned, Tippoo abandoned himself to the councils of his French officers. He was admitted by them, as a proof of brotherhood, to a participation in the secrets of the correspondence held between Chapuis, Raymond and Perron. Buonaparte was successful in Egypt, and it was debated only when the time should be fixed for the army of Tippoo to be set in motion and to overwhelm Madras. The army itself was full of confidence, and great attention had been paid to its discipline by the French; all branches were more perfectly efficient than they had ever been. The Sultaun had now no apprehension about the fort, for he had been surrounding it with another wall and ditch, and the gates had been strengthened by out-works. There never was a time when all his prospects were so bright, when the political condition of India suggested movement—when all the native

princes, by one exertion on his part, might be incited to make common cause against the English, and when, by the proposed expedition against Manilla, the British forces would be much reduced, both at Madras and in Bengal. It was at this hazardous moment that the genius of Lord Mornington, guided by the sound views of the political agents at the various courts, decided upon the line of action to be pursued. The French interest in India was to be annihilated at all hazards; therefore, after a preparatory treaty with the Nizam, an English force, by rapid marches, arrived at Hyderabad, and joining the subsidiary force there, surrounded the French camp, which was found to be in a state of previous mutiny against its officers. The whole submitted; and a blow, moral as well as physical, was struck against the French influence, from which it never recovered.

The effect of this news at Seringapatam may be imagined; and when it was followed up by that of the glorious victory of Nelson at the mouth of the Nile, the Sultaun's spirit fell. It was in vain that he wrote apparently sincere letters to the Governor-General, and at the same

moment dispatched camel-loads of treasure to Sindia to urge him to move southwards ; the one estimated the true worth of the correspondence, and the wily Mahratta, though he took the money, yet stirred not a foot ; he had too much at stake to be led into a quarrel of which he could not see any probable termination. Tippoo's ambassadors at the courts of Sindia and Holkar, of the Peshwa, of the Rajah of Berar, all wrote word that these potentates would join the cause ; but their letters were cold and wary, and the Sultaun discovered too late that he must abide the brunt of the blow himself.

His dread of the English was vented daily in his Durbar, in compositions the most abominable that his fertile brain could invent. Besides his pretended supernatural revelations, letters were read, purporting to be from Delhi, from Calcutta, from Lucknow, describing the atrocious conduct of the English, the forced conversion of Mahomedans to Christianity, the violation of females of rank by the soldiery, the plunder and sack of towns given up to rapine ; and after reading them, Tippoo would give vent to frantic prayers that judgment might

come upon them. In this, however, as in many other instances, he overreached the mark he aimed at. A few of the flatterers around him, at every succeeding story, swore to spread it abroad; and while they applauded, pretended to feel excitement; but they ridiculed them in secret, and they were soon listened to, except by the most bigoted, with contempt.

Thus passed the whole of 1798, a year of anxious suspense to the British in India, when their power rested in a balance which a hair might have turned. During this period the mind of Tippoo presents a humiliating spectacle: now raving for conquest, now sunk in despair and dread at the slow but certain preparations of the English—at times prosecuting, with all the bigotry and savageness of his nature, conversions of the Hindoos in various parts of his dominions, and at others bowing down in slavish obedience to the dictates of the Brahmins, and offering up in the temples of the fort sacrifices in secret for the discomfiture of his enemies; while in the retired apartments of the palace magical rites were held—abominable orgies, at which he himself assisted, to relate which as we have heard them

told, would be to defile our pages with obscenities too gross to be repeated.

In the midst of this mental darkness there would break out gleams of kindly feeling towards his sons—his officers—oftentimes to a sick servant; and upon the lady Fureeda he lavished such love as his heart, cold by nature, possessed, —and whom his secret sufferings, absolute prostration of intellect at times when fresh disastrous news reached him, would inspire with a compassion she would fain have expressed in words, in those consolings which to a fond and wounded spirit are acceptable and bearable only from a woman.

There was another on whom his memory rested, and whom he besought, now by threats, now by immense rewards, to join his cause—it was Herbert Compton. His existence was known only to Jaffar and the Sultaun: the latter had, during the lapse of years and while the repairs of his fort proceeded, offered him rank, power, women, all that his imagination could suggest to dazzle a young man, but in vain; he had threatened him with death, but this was equally vain. Herbert had looked on death too

long to fear it; and despite of the climate, the weary life he led had grown almost insupportable, and he saw no relief from it; death would have been welcome to him, but he was suffered to live on. Even the visits of Jaffar were events which, however trying to him at the time, and exciting to one so secluded, were yet looked back upon with pleasure from the very thought they created. Sometimes the Sultaun would relent towards him, and seem on the point of releasing him and others; but the shame of the act, the indignant remonstrance that he dreaded from the British, and the advice of Jaffar himself, deterred him. Thus the poor fellow lingered on almost without hope or fear, and in the end, amidst other more stirring and anxious matters, his existence was almost forgotten.

How often too would Tippoo's thoughts revert to Kasim Ali, his conduct to whom, in spite of the treachery denounced by Jaffar, would sometimes rise up in judgement against his conscience. To do him justice, however, it should be mentioned that, when the emissaries of Jaffar returned foiled and with Kasim's message, he did make inquires in the bazaars relative to

the money which Jaffar had told him Kasim Ali had remitted to Hyderabad; and he found all his statements so completely established, that they confirmed in his mind at the time the conviction that Kasim had been false to him, and that his falsehood had been long meditated, and at last successfully executed. But this wore off at length; and for one so esteemed, nay loved, there remained a painful impression that injustice had been done: to say the truth, when all around him were suspected, the flatterers and courtiers from their habitual subserviency, and his elder and more trusted officers from their blunt advice and open condemnation of many of his schemes and proceedings, he often longed for the presence of the young Patél, who would in his own person have united the qualities he most needed—sincere affection, joined to a mild demeanour and an honest heart.

Early in 1799 it was impossible to disguise from himself that the time had come when he should either make resistance against the English invasion—for his attack upon Madras had long been abandoned as impracticable even

by the French—or he should march forth at the head of his army and oppose them. He determined on the latter course; and leaving his trusty commanders, Syud Sahib and Poornea, in charge of the Fort, he marched, on a day when his astrologers and his own calculations of lucky and unlucky days promised an uninterrupted career of prosperity and victory, to meet the Bombay army, which was approaching through Coorg, at the head of fifty thousand men, the flower of his troops. Once in the field, his ancient vigour and courage revived; his army was in the highest efficiency; the Bombay force he knew could not be a fifth of his own; and by selecting his own ground, which he should be enabled to do, he might practise the same manœuvre as he had done at Perampaukum with Baillie, and, by drawing them into an ambuscade, destroy them. His low estimation, however, of the English was fated to be corrected; and though at Sedaseer, where he met the Bombay army, he led in person several desperate charges upon the British, and though under his eye his troops fought well, and were driven back with loss only to advance

again and again in a series of desperate onsets for five hours, yet he was defeated. Losing all presence of mind and confidence in his army, although there was every chance of success had he persevered in his attacks on Lieut. General Stuart's corps, he retreated from the scene of action upon the capital, to draw from thence fresh troops with which he might oppose the march of the grand army from the East.

And now began that gloomy thought for the future, that utter despair of his life which continued to the last, checquered only by fits of the wildest excitement, by blind reliance at times upon vain rites and ceremonies, and forced hilarity, which, the effect of despair, was even more fearful to behold. The great drama of his fate was rapidly drawing to a close—a gorgeous spectacle, with mighty men and armies for actors, and the people of India for spectators.

CHAPTER XVII.

The morning of the twenty-seventh of March broke with unclouded splendour; the army of the Sultaun were expecting their enemies with impatience, and the result was looked to with confidence. Tippoo had been urged by Chapuis to take up a position upon the Madoor, in the same pass as that where Kasim Ali had been attacked; but the Frenchmen had lost very considerably the influence they possessed, since the news of their defeat in Egypt and the discomfiture of Raymond at Hyderabad, and he determined to pursue the bent of his own inclination, both as to the ground he should select and the disposition of his troops. Since daylight he had been on horseback, indefatiga-

ble in marshaling his army. The ground he had selected was commanding, and covered the road. Malvilly, he knew, was the destination of the English on that day; and as it was one marked by a particularly auspicious conjunction of the planets, he determined on trying the result of a general action. When a few attempted to dissuade him that morning from opposing the English, lest by a defeat he should dispirit his troops and unfit them for the siege which all felt sure must follow, he flew into a violent passion.

"Are we cowards," he said, "that we should retire before the kafirs and cowardly English? No! let them come on—the base-born rascals! let them come on, and taste of death! If our father—may his name be ever honoured!—could overwhelm the English in the field, should we not follow so exalted an example? No, by the Prophet, we will not retire; the day is fortunate—the planets are in good conjunction. If ye are cowards, and like not the English shot—go! your absence is better than your presence."

But all swore to fight to the last drop of blood, and the Sultaun's disposition was made. Soon

after sunrise all were at their posts—the heavy guns in the centre, the infantry behind. Two corps, one of them the favourite Kureem Cushoon, were pushed forward upon the flanks, and hundreds of rocket-men were interspersed with the line. It was a gallant and inspiring sight to see that huge force drawn up in steady array, determined upon retrieving their fame that day, and fighting for Islam and for their Sultaun.

They had waited long: the Sultaun had heard from scouts that the English had left their camp long before dawn, and their coming was looked for with eagerness. "They will fly," he cried, "when they see the array; the sons of dogs and swine will not dare to face the true believers."

"Yes," said Nedeem Khan and Nusrut Ali, favourites who were always near him, "it will be as my lord says, we shall have no fighting. Will they dare to advance against these cannon, and the various divisions which are drawn up in such wonderful order that not even a rat could get between?"

"Infatuation!" said Meer Ghuffoor to Abdool Wahab; "for all the boastings of those young

coxcombs, thou wilt see them turn and fly. I have served the English, and know them well. Ere an hour elapses after the first shot, we shall be in full retreat."

"I trust not, Meer Sahib," said the other; "but what is that yonder?"

"'Tis they! 'tis they!" cried the Sultaun. "Now upon them, my sons! upon them, and let us see ye do brave deeds. Your Sultaun is beholding you!"

It was indeed a beautiful sight to behold. The Sultaun was on a high ground, and could see all. A few English red-coats were first seen—then more; the sun glanced from their bright bayonets and musket-barrels as they proceeded. Gradually column after column came on; though they were still at some distance, there was a halt perceived, and considerable bustle.

"They retreat! they retreat!" cried the Sultaun, in an ecstasy of joy, clapping his hands and laughing in his excitement. It was changed in an instant, when, after a short disposition of the troops, the English army advanced; but it appeared such a mere hand-

ful of men, when compared with his own force, that his derision grew even louder. "Ha! ha!" he cried, "they have left half their army to keep their baggage. They hold me cheap indeed, to attempt to attack me with the few that are yonder! But it is well: Inshalla! ye will see, sirs, ye will see! What troops are those on the left?" he asked after awhile, as he examined them with a telescope; "what green standard is that? Dare the infidels to use the sacred colour?"

Just then the breeze unfurled the standard to its full width, and, as all descried the white crescent and ball beneath it, a cry of exultation burst from the Sultaun.

"'Tis the standard of Sikundur Jah! 'Tis they—the effeminate Dekhanees!—men who are no better than eunuchs. Advancing upon my own Cutcherie too—upon the Kureem Cushoon! Inshalla! Inshalla! let them come. The renegades from the faith, advancing against the favoured of the Prophet! Holy Mohamed confound them!"

The English army halted: its long columns deployed into lines steadily and gracefully; it

was a beautiful sight in that bright sun. There was a large opening in the line, and Tippoo rode forward, urging his cavalry to break through and attack the General, who with his staff was beyond. "Ah! had I Kasim Ali and my brave old Rhyman Khan now, they would shame ye!" he cried to those who he fancied were tardy in movement; but they did their duty—they charged.

"Steady, men!" cried the officer at the head of the regiment nearest the point of danger—it was Philip Dalton; "let them come near."

The cavalry thundered on—a grand picturesque mass—shouting their cries of "Deen! deen!" and "Alla Yar!" The English were not to be daunted; they were steady as rocks, and awaited the word, "Present—fire!" The effect was deadly. As the smoke cleared away, the flying mass was seen in wild confusion, and before the line a heap of men and horses struggling. A few daring fellows had, however, dashed through the interval, and fell gallantly fighting in the rear.

Meanwhile the Sultaun's infantry advanced steadily and firmly; he cheered them on, putting

himself at their head even within shot, and then he turned to watch his favourite division. It was composed of picked men: their arms, dress, discipline, were all superior to the rest of the army; they were advancing against the Nizam's troops, and were confident of victory. The Sultaun was in an ecstasy of delight. Little imagined he then to whom he was opposed; that one led the troops, which he expected would fly like dust before the whirlwind, to whom fear was unknown—who bore within him the germ of that renown, which has raised him to the proudest, the most glorious pinnacle of heroic fame—Wellesley! Wellington! What heart so callous that does not bound at those illustrious names, recalling with them victories upon victories to his remembrance—not the result of fortuitous circumstances, but of devoted bravery, of admirable foresight, of consummate skill, of patience and fortitude under every privation through a long series of years—the most splendid array of triumph that ever the world beheld, which, already so glorious, will yet increase in after times to a renown more brilliant than we can at present estimate.

"Now ye will see them run!—now they will fly!—Forward, my brave fellows! forward to victory!—I vow every man a month's pay, and a jaghire to their commander.—Look! they halt—not a man wavering! it is a gallant sight. They will fire!—then upon them with the steel.—Shookr Alla! how many have fallen!" he exclaimed, as the division fired, and many of those opposed to it fell. "Now charge!—charge, for the love of Alla!—why do ye wait? ye lose time.—Alla! Alla! the enemy fire in turn! Merciful Prophet! how many have tasted of death!—Never heed, however—now is the time!—while they are loading, upon them!—upon them! Ya Kubeer! Ya Hyder!"

It was fearful to look on him: his hands were clasped together, his eyes strained, his features quivering with excitement and anxiety. On the issue of a moment was victory or ruin.

"Curse them!" he cried; "curse them! they waver.—Holy Prophet! why dost thou not turn them? Alla! Alla! why dost thou not blast the infidels?—They waver! the Feringhees

are upon them!—they fly!—now there is no hope—Prophet of Alla spare them!"

It was a sight which curdled his blood: his favourite corps turned—they dared not abide the charge of the British and Nizam's division, led by the gallant Wellesley; and the cavalry, headed by his old enemy Floyd, dashed out upon them. Hundreds went down before that terrible charge: the Cushoon, which had so lately inspired confidence, turned as one man, and in an instant became a confused rabble, flying for their lives; in the midst of whom were the English cavalry, riding down the fugitives, while they cut at them with their long swords.

The Sultaun gazed breathless and stupified for a few moments: no one dared to speak. At last he turned; his face wore a ghastly expression of horror, at which his attendants shuddered. For an instant he looked back; the cavalry thundered on—other portions of his troops were giving way before them. He could look no more, but dashing his heels into the flanks of his charger fled from the field.

"Shabash! Shabash! well done, gallant fel-

low!" cried many English officers, surrounding a richly-dressed native, apparently of rank, who, clad in a magnificent suit of chain-armour over a cloth-of-gold vest, with a bright steel cap on his head, and upon a noble chestnut horse, now rode up at full gallop, accompanied by many of his Risala, as martial in appearance as himself, and equally well mounted. Their swords were red with blood, and their faces flushed and excited with conquest. "Well done! well done! ye have earned the good-will of the General, and ye will be rewarded."

"I thank you," he said; "you are kind, and flatter our poor services; but can you tell me where Colonel Dalton is?"

"He is yonder," said an officer; "come, I will lead you to him."

The action was now over. Philip had borne an honourable part, and was attending to his wounded men when Kasim rode up to him.

"Behold!" he said, showing his sword, "I have fulfilled my promise; I am faithful to the salt I eat; thou wilt testify to that?"

"Noble fellow! I will indeed; thou hast distinguished thyself before the army. Come, I

will lead thee to the General,—he will love to look on one so brave and devoted."

"They were my old companions," said Kasim, "but I knew them not; my heart was steeled against them: had I wavered, I was disgraced for ever. Ye suspected me, but now I am free of taint."

"Thou art indeed, and thou wilt see how grateful an English commander can be. Come!"

That night Kasim, Philip Dalton, and many others were in the General's tent; they had been asking him about the road. He seemed to think awhile.

"Will ye take my advice?" he asked, "the advice of one who is not worthy to give it?"

"Say on," replied the General.

"Abandon this road, then," said Kasim; "there is a ford at Sosillay, two easy marches from hence; it is deep, but the water is now low and it will be practicable. I will guide you to it, if you will trust me. You will cross the river there — forage is plentiful, the other bank is clear of troops, and ye can hurry on and surprise the city."

"Is this true?" said the General.

"By your head and eyes—by your salt it is!"

"Will any one answer for you? it is a fearful risk."

Kasim looked round; his eyes met Philip's. "Come," he said, "if thou art for a ride, come this night and I will show it thee: I and my men will escort thee: Wilt *thou* trust me?"

"To the death!" said Philip.

"I believe him," said the General; "and he will see that this great service shall be rewarded. Nevertheless, I should like to know more about the ford, and if it can be reconnoitered. Will you make the report, Colonel? you can take an escort of cavalry."

"With pleasure; you shall know early tomorrow."

"And I will accompany you," said another officer; "it will be a pleasant ride."

"Come, gentlemen," said Kasim, "we lose time, and we have a long ride before us."

* * * * * *

The Sultaun, plunged into despair, had retired westward. The army had collected, but thousands were missing, killed, or had deserted

from his standard. Still there was hope: his officers were yet faithful; the forage of the north bank of the Cavery was utterly destroyed; and the active Poornea, at the head of the irregular cavalry, was out burning villages and setting fire to the grass of the wide plains. If the English should advance, they would be drawn on to defeat as before. There was still hope: his plans of defence were being matured; troops poured into the Fort from all sides, and provisions for a year. He had treasure too, and there was no fear. What could the English, with their small amount of artillery, effect against the hundreds of cannon in the Fort and the new fortifications? "Let them come on!" he would say; "with that fort before, and a bare country behind them, let us see how long they will stay!" And his words were echoed by his sycophants; but it was easy to see, for all that, how dread gnawed at his heart.

On the evening of the fourth day after the action, he was in his tent of audience. He was confident, for no news had been heard of the English army, and it had not advanced upon the road as he had expected. He hoped it

had retreated, or was stationary for want of forage; and he was even asserting broadly that it had.

Suddenly a messenger entered with dismay upon his face. Tippoo knew not what to think. All his officers were present, and every one trembled, though they knew not what to expect.

"Speak, Madur-bukhta!" cried Tippoo fiercely; "what hast thou to say?"

"May I be your sacrifice! May I be pardoned," stammered the man; "the English—the kafirs—have crossed the river!"

"Crossed the river?" echoed all; "how? where?"

"Dog!" cried the Sultaun, "if thou liest I will have thee torn asunder. Where did they cross?"

"At Sosillay."

"At Sosillay! who has been the traitor? is any one missing?"

"May I be your sacrifice!" said an officer, "it must be Kasim Ali Patél. He was seen hewing down the true believers at Malvilly."

"Kasim Ali!" gasped the Sultaun; "Alla

help me! then all is lost." And he sank down on his musnud in stupor.

Long he remained so, only at times repeating "Kasim Ali" and "Sosillay!"

Hardly any one spoke except in whispers. After some delay, sherbet was brought to him, and he seemed to revive. He sat up, passed his hand across his forehead, as though his brain was bewildered: then he arose, and looked around him; his face was wan and care-worn; those few minutes appeared to have done the work of years. Many burst into tears.

"Ye weep," he said, "ye weep; why should ye weep for one abandoned of Alla? I have no hope now. Why stay ye with a man who is doomed? why link your fate to a drowning wretch, who hath not even a straw upon the whirlpool of his fate to clutch at? Go! ye have served me well—ye have fought for me, bled for me. Go—may Alla keep ye! Ye have been my friends, my companions. I have been harsh, often cruel. Will ye pardon me? will ye pardon a poor slave of Alla? Go! I—I—have ever loved ye, and now—"

He was interrupted: an officer, with stream-

ing eyes, rushed from a side of the tent, and throwing himself at the Sultaun's feet, clasped his knees and sobbed passionately aloud.

Tippoo could endure no more. He who had been by turns bitter in sarcasm, brutal in mirth, cruel, proud, exacting, unfeeling, tyrannical, overbearing among his subjects, was now humbled. He appeared to struggle for a moment; but, unable to quell the wild tumult within him, he burst into tears—the first he had ever been seen to shed.

Then ensued a scene which words cannot paint—a scene of passionate raving, of tears, of oaths, of fidelity to death. Men embraced one another, and swore to die side by side. Those who had cherished animosities for years, cast themselves on each other's breasts, and forgot enmity in the bond of general affliction. All swore before Alla and the Prophet, by the Sultaun's head and the salt they ate, that they would die as martyrs; they determined to retreat upon the city, and to fight under its walls to death.

The army retired, and awaited the onset, but they were disappointed; the English army passed three miles to the left, in glittering array,

and encamped at the opposite side of the Fort to that on which the former attack had been made, and for the time the Sultaun exulted in his safety.

Days passed: the thunder of cannon ceased not night or day, and the hearts of all were appalled. No mercy was expected from the British. Death would have been welcome at first; but its gradual approach, and the stern progression of the English to victory, could not be shut out from men's eyes. All the redoubts beyond the Fort had been carried long ago; even the French, upon whom the eye of the Sultaun rested in hope, were beaten back by the native troops of his enemies, though they fought bravely. Then he felt how he had been cajoled, deceived, betrayed into destruction. To all his letters to the English commander there was but one reply—send the money and the hostages, and the cannon shall cease, but not before. At this his proud heart rebelled; there were those around him who still ridiculed the idea of danger, but he well knew its reality. Day by day the mosque resounded with his frantic prayers; the Moolas to this day tell

how impious they were—how he raved, prayed, cursed by turns, till those who heard believed that a judgement would follow them.

He held no communication with his family, for his presence in the Zenana was ever a signal for an outburst of grief. He lived in his hall of audience, or in a small room off it, where most part of the day and night was passed in vain astrological calculations, or those horrible magical rites we have before alluded to; at other times he was upon the walls, directing cannon, and firing with his own hand.

The breach became practicable; the guns on both sides of it had long been silenced, and men looked on at the work of destruction, and heard the storm of shot, shells and grape which poured through it, in sullen despair. The brave Meer Ghuffoor, who was devoted to the Sultaun, saw that it could not be defended much longer; when the day dawned he went to the monarch, to try to rouse him to a sense of his danger: it was vain.

"There is nothing between thee and thine enemies, O my Sultaun!" said the Syud; "nothing to prevent the storm. Their men are

ready in the trenches, and have been there since it was light; I have watched them. The walls are gone. If your slave is permitted, he will commence a wall and a ditch across the inside, that cannot be breached, and it will stop them."

"Go, Syud, we fear not," said the Sultaun; we have hope in other things; events will happen which thou knowest not of. The English will be blasted this day—withered from the face of the earth. Already we have ordered Fateehas for tomorrow. Go, old man! we feel for thy zeal, but there is no fear; Mars is yet in the circle of planets."

"Thou wilt never see tomorrow," said the Syud prophetically, "unless what I advise is done. I will do it; I have sought death these many days, but it comes not—I may find it there."

"Go then, in the name of the Shitan go!" cried the Sultaun hastily, "trouble me no more. Do as thou wilt, but trouble me not.—So, Runga Swamee! what news? hast thou prepared all?"

"Alas!" said the Syud as he went out, "I shudder at his communion with those Brahmin

infidels. I would to Alla I were with my old brethren in arms; but that is now impossible, and death alone will be honourable to the old soldier."

"All is prepared, O Sultaun!" replied the Brahmin, "we wait for the men—thou hast them ready?"

"Ay, there are twelve dogs, sons of unchaste mothers, swine!—take them."

"The goddess will be pleased, O Sultaun—she will drink their blood. Tonight, tonight she will put fear into their hearts; she will send rain—the river will fill—they will be cut off."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the Sultaun, "and twelve base-born Feringhees will go to hell. Who is without—Jaffar?"

"Refuge of the world! I am here."

"Hast thou obeyed the orders I gave thee yesterday?"

"Protector of the poor! I have; not one lives now—Feringhee, Moslim, or Hindoo; the prisoners died in the night. It was hard work, there were so many, but it was done." And he chuckled. "There were twelve spared—the last twelve."

"Good: if the Fort is taken, the kafirs will look in vain for their brethren. Now go thou to the prison, take the twelve sons of perdition who were captured in the sortie, bind them hand and foot, and convey them to the temple. Thou art ready, Runga Swamee? As the sun rises, their blood must flow, one by one. The men are ready, the priests wait, the swords are sharp—what more? Enough—go! thou understandest, Jaffar?"

"Ay, my lord."

"Hast thou sent for him—for Compton?"

"The men go tomorrow."

"Good: when he comes he shall be the next offering, if thou wantest more, Pundit."

"I am thankful," replied the man: "thou wilt gain much favour for this and thy gifts to Brahmins—thirty thousand years of protection for every offering."

"Inshalla!" said the Sultaun; "go! time flies."

It was noon, the day was bright and hot, and a strong mirage flickered upon the white tents of the English camp, the parched ground around them, and the black and rocky bed of the river. In the camp many men were moving

about, and marching to and fro. The Sultaun was looking at them with his telescope, but saw nothing to excite alarm. He was gayer than usual, for he had seen his face in a jar of oil, and the reflection had been fortunate.

"Rain will fall tonight in the hills," he said to a favourite near him, Rajah Khan, as he observed some heavy masses of white fleecy clouds in the west, which hung over the nearer hills and shrouded the distant peaks. "The Brahmins are right, the sacrifice has done good; after all, only a few Feringhees have gone to hell before their time—ha! ha!"

"May your prosperity increase!" said the officer, "they have deserved their death."

As he spoke a man rushed up the steps of the cavalier. Tears were in his eyes, and his manner was wild.

"What has happened, O fool?" said the Sultaun; "hast thou seen the devil?"

"Khodawund!" said the soldier, speaking with difficulty, "the Syud, the holy Meer Ghuffoor is dead."

"Merciful Alla!" cried Tippoo, "art thou sure of this?"

"Alas! quite sure, Light of the World! I carried him away: behold his blood."

"It was his destiny," said the Sultaun gloomily; "it was once said his fate was linked with mine, —let it come. His death was that of a soldier, may mine be the same! Go, let him be buried with honour. We will dine here," he added to an attendant; "we feel hot within, and this air from the water is cool."

His light repast was soon finished, and again he sat looking towards the trenches. He thought there were many men in them; as if by mutual consent, the firing had ceased on both sides, and no sound arose except the busy hum of the city: in the English camp all was still as death. He speculated for awhile idly upon the unusual quietness, and looked again. On a sudden a man climbed upon the mound of the trench; he was tall and noble in appearance; his height was exaggerated by his position—he looked a giant. The Sultaun's heart sank within him; he could not be mistaken in those features—it was Baird, whom he had so often reviled. "He comes to revenge the old man," he muttered—"to revenge Mathews!"

It was a noble sight to see that one man stand thus alone in front of both armies: he appeared to look at the Fort for an instant, then drew his sword from its scabbard, and as it came forth it flashed in the sunlight. He waved it high in the air. Another leaped to his side: he was a native, and wore a steel cap and glittering chain-armour; a shield hung on his arm, and he waved a broad sabre. They leaped together from the mound, followed by hundreds, who with loud cheers dashed on in regular order.

"Prophet of Alla!" cried the Sultaun, "they come—Baird and Kasim Ali! Look to the breach! every man to the breach! defend it with your lives!"

He was hurrying away, when a thought appeared to strike him. "Stay!" he cried, "bring water; we have eaten, and are unclean; we would not die like a kafir, but one for whom the Apostle waits ere he enters Paradise. I come, O Mohamed! I come quickly now."

CHAPTER XVIII.

"To the breach! to the breach!" was now the cry far and wide; those who loved the Sultaun hurried there to die, to stop with their bodies the ascent of the devoted English—a living wall in place of that which had been torn down.

It was a sight on which men looked with throbbing hearts and aching eyes from both sides—those in the English camp, and those in the Fort. There were but few cannon to stop the English; all upon the breach had been dismounted, and no one dared show himself upon the dismantled defences to plant others. But as the British advanced, a storm of shot and rockets met them, which was enough to have turned more daring men. Many went down

before it, many writhed and struggled; the column was like a march of ants where a human foot has just trodden, some hurrying on, a few turning to carry away a wounded and disabled comrade.

"They are drunk!" cried the Sultaun; "the hogs—the kafirs—they have been plied with wine. Be firm, brothers, and fear not, though they are desperate. Be firm, ye with the long spears, and do ye of the Kureem Kutcheree regain your lost fame! Remember, we are present,—a hundred rupees for every Feringhee! Look to your aim—they cannot pass the ditch."

Such broken sentences escaped him from time to time, as he fired upon the enemy with his own hand, often with deadly aim; but though the resistance made was desperate, what was able to withstand the hot ardour of this assault? Man after man went down before the strong arm of Baird, who toiled like a knight of old in the breach, cheering on his men with loud cries of revenge for the murdered. Kasim fought beside him, and equalled the deeds of the British leader.

"They bear charmed lives!" cried the Sul-

taun, dashing to the ground the gun he had just fired; "twice have I struck down the men close to them, but the balls harmed them not."

"Retire, I beseech you, O prince!" cried Rajah Khan and a hundred others around him; "this is no place for you; on our lives be it we drive them back."

"No, I will die here," said Tippoo doggedly; "they shall pass into the Fort over my body; but the ditch is yet before them—they cannot pass it unless it is filled as it was at—Bah! why should I have thought of that scene?"

This passed in a moment: the struggle on the breach was over—the defenders and their enemies lay there in heaps; still there was the ditch to cross, which was wide and deep; for an instant even Baird was staggered, and his men ran right and left seeking for a passage. Kasim Ali and he were close together; there was a scaffolding, and a plank over it leading to the rampart on the other side: it was enough, the way was found, and hundreds poured over it quicker than thought.

It was the last sight the Sultaun saw—everything else swam before his eyes; he looked stu-

pified, and said, hurriedly and gloomily, "It is finished—where are my bearers? take me to the palace—the women must die—every one: we would not have them defiled by the kafirs. Come! haste! or we are too late."

They led him to his palankeen, mingling with the fugitives, who in the passage between the two walls were rushing on to the small postern where it had been left; men had been sent for it, but what bearers could struggle against that frantic crowd? As they hurried on, Rajah Khan vainly endeavoured to persuade him to fly by the river-gate; Purnea and his son were out, he said, and they might yet escape to the fastnesses of the west.

"Peace!" cried the Sultaun; "the women are sacred—they must die first; then we will throw ourselves upon the kafirs, cry Alla Yar, and die. May hell be their portion!" he exclaimed suddenly, as he stumbled and fell. They raised him—a shot had struck him; he was sick to death, but they were strong men, and they urged him on, supporting him. Another cry he uttered—they saw blood pour

from his back—he was wounded once more; but the gate was close at hand, and they strained every nerve to reach it. Hundreds were struggling there: the fierce English were behind, advancing with loud oaths and cheers, maddened by excited revenge, slaughter, lust, and hope of plunder. A fearful thing is a strife like that, when men become monsters, thirsting for blood.

They reached the palankeen, and laid the Sultaun in it. "Water! water!" he gasped; "air! I am choking! take me out, take me out, I shall die here! Water! for the love of Alla, water! one drop! one drop!"

"Remember the murdered, give no quarter," cried many whose bayonets were already reeking with blood. "Here is a gate, we shall be inside directly—hurra!"

"They come, Huzrut," said Rajah Khan, trying to rouse the dying man; "they come, they are near, let us tell them who thou art, they will spare thee."

"Spare me!" he cried, rousing himself at the last words; "No! they burn for revenge,

and I should be hung like a dog; no! I will die here." He was very faint, and spoke feebly.

"Here is a prince—I'll be the first!" cried a soldier, dashing into the gateway and snatching rudely at the rosary which was around the Sultaun's neck.

It rallied the expiring lamp of life. "Dog of a kafir! son of an unchaste mother!" cried the Sultaun, gnashing his teeth as he seized a sword which lay by him, "get thee to hell!" and he struck at him with all his might; it was the last effort of life, but it was not fatal.

"Damnation!" muttered the man, setting his teeth with the pain of the wound, as he raised his musket.

He fired, the ball pierced the skull, the Sultaun's eyes glared for an instant, quivered in their sockets, then his head fell, and he was dead. The lion of the faith, the refuge of the world, had gone to his account!

"Well met, noble Kasim," cried Philip Dalton, as heading his party he dashed down the cavalier which had first been gained, and was now in the body of the place; "keep with me; thou knowest the prisons?"

"Every one, colonel; but haste! they may even now be destroying them."

Philip shuddered, there was no time for thought. Many men were around him, and they rushed on, led by Kasim Ali, whose reddened sword, and armour sprinkled with blood, showed how he had been employed.

Eagerly, and with excitement which hardly admitted thought, so engrossing was it, did those two and Charles Hayward search every part of the fort, and every place where it was possible that prisoners could have been concealed: they found none. And when the palace was opened they rushed into its most secret prisons, and burst them open; they found traces of recent habitation by Englishmen; and while their fears were horribly confirmed, their last hopes for Herbert Compton departed.

"Ah! could I but meet the villain Jaffar!" cried Kasim, as they gave up further search, for it was now dark; "if indeed he be alive, then would we wring from him the fate of your poor friend. Inshalla! he may be found: I know his haunts, and will watch them all night; I will come to thee in the morning."

"I shall be here with my regiment," Dalton said sadly; "but I have no hope, for that cowardly villain will have fled long ere now with his ill-gotten wealth."

The morning broke gloomily after that fearful day and night; for during the latter there had been appalling alarms, shots, screams from terrified, plundered, and often violated women; there were many dreadful excesses, but they were checked. As the day advanced, order was restored once more, and the moderation of the English in their victory, their justice, and protection of all, is yet sung and said through the country by wandering minstrels.

The Sultaun's body had been discovered where he had fallen; his faithful attendant lay beside him, with others, who had fought with him to the last. They were brought into the palace, and recognised by the women with unfeigned and bitter grief. Of all that host of secluded women, two only truly mourned his fate. The one was his mother, the other Fureeda, who could with difficulty be torn from his body, as they took it away for burial. Her love had grown with misfortune; for in her society he

had found rest from care and from his own restless mind; of late he had visited no other, and, despite of his vices, she had felt security with him, whom no one else looked on without fear; and as his fate approached, she foresaw it, pitied, and loved him.

The last rites of the faith had been performed upon the body. The grave clothes, which, brought from Mekha, had been for years in his possession, were put on with the requisite ceremonies, ablutions and fumigations; the sheet, filled with flowers, was laid over the body; the attendant Moolas chanted thrice those parts of the Koran, the "Soora e fateeha," and the "Qool hoo Alla!" They were about to raise it, to place it in the coffin, when two women again rushed in; the one was old, wrinkled, and grey—it was his nurse; she beat her bare and withered breasts, and, kneeling beside the corpse, showed them to it with passionate exclamations. "Thou hast sucked them," she cried, "when I was young, and they were full of milk! Alas! alas! that I should have lived to say, I bestow it on thee."

The other was Fureeda; she spoke not, but

sobbed bitterly, as she looked on the pinched and sharpened features, and livid face of him who had till the last clung to her with affection.

They were removed with difficulty, and the procession passed out slowly, the Moolas chanting the funeral service with slow and melancholy cadences. The conquerors of the dead awaited his coming, and, in silent homage to their illustrious enemy, lifted their plumed hats from their brows, as the body passed on to its last resting-place beside the noble Hyder. The troops, which had the day before been arrayed in arms against him, now paid the last honours to his death; and through a street of British soldiers, resting upon their fire-arms reversed, while their bands played the dead march in Saul, the procession wound its way. Without in the street were thousands of men, who, frantic in their grief, cried aloud to Alla; and women, who beat their breasts, and wailed, or else uttered piercing shrieks of woe, flung dust into the air, and, casting loose their hair, strove to prostrate themselves before the body of the dead. The solemn chant proceeded; each verse

sung by the Moolas, who in their flowing robes preceded the coffin, was repeated by all around. The body was surrounded by all the officers of Tippoo's late army who had survived, and those of the Nizam's force, on foot; and there was one of his sons on horseback, who sat in a kind of stupor at the overwhelming affliction.

The day had been gloomy, and was close and hot; not a breath of wind stirred the trees, and heavy lurid masses of clouds hung over the city, from whence at times a low muttering growl of thunder would break, and seemingly rattle all over the heavens. Men felt heavily the weight of the atmosphere, and every now and then looked up at the threatening mass which hung above them.

Through the plain, which extends to the mausoleum of Hyder, the multitude poured; and as the procession gradually approached its goal, the frantic cries of the people increased, almost drowning the melancholy dead march and the chant which arose, now one, now the other, and sometimes both blended into a wild harmony, upon the still air. Then there was a momentary silence, only to be succeeded by

bursts of grief even more violent than before. The thunder appeared to increase in loudness every moment, while flashes of lightning darted across the heavens from side to side.

The procession reached the burial-place; the grenadiers formed a street, rested upon their fire-arms reversed, and the body passed on. The band now ceased, and the bier being laid down, the body was taken from it, preparatory to being laid in the grave. The Moola, (for one alone now officiated) raised his voice in the chant of the first creed; it was a powerful one, but now sounded thin and small among that vast assembly; he had said only a few words, when a flash of lightning burst from above, nearly blinding them, and a peal of thunder followed, so crashing, so stunning, that the stoutest hearts quailed under it. It died away, and as it receded far into the east, the melancholy tone of the Moola's voice, which had been drowned in it, again arose clear and distinct, like the distant wail of a trumpet.

The heavens were still for awhile; but as the body was laid in its last narrow resting-place, its face to the west, and as the Moolas chanted

out "Salāam wo Aliekoom wo Ruhmut Ullā-āh! *" again a crashing peal burst forth, and their words were lost in the deafening roar. Now peal after peal rolled from the clouds. As yet there was no rain nor wind, and the black mass appeared almost to descend upon the tall palm-trees which waved above, and flashes of lightning so vivid that the heavens blazed under the light, darted from it, and played fearfully around. Men looked at each other in awe and wonder, and felt their own littleness, when the mighty lay cold in death before them, and the thunder of his Creator roared, seemingly as in deprecation of the deeds of his life.

The companies formed on each side of the grave to pay their last tribute of respect to a soldier's memory, and the word was given—"Fire!" The rattle which followed seemed to be taken up by the sky; away rolled the awful echoes into the far west, and, lost for a moment among the huge crags and mountains of the Ghâts, seemed to return with double force to meet the peals of artillery and volleys of musketry which broke from the Fort and the

* Peace and the grace of God be with you!

British army. The bands struck up again, but they were dimly heard; and, as all returned to the sound of their merry music, it seemed a mockery amidst the din and turmoil of that tempest.

* * * * * *

But we must carry our readers back to Herbert Compton, over whom years had passed, chequered by no events save the visits of Jaffar Sahib, to urge upon him compliance with the Sultaun's demands for assistance, plans of fortifications, or military instructions. The Sultaun had from the first taken it into his head that Herbert was a man of education and skill beyond his fellows; and as every idea was esteemed a revelation from Providence, he had clung to this one with all the obstinacy of his nature, for he had a necessity for the aid Herbert might have given. Often he would forget him for months. Once or twice, provoked by his obstinate refusals, he had issued orders for his death, and revoked as fast as he had written them. Herbert had lingered on upon those mountains, the cold and mists of which, exaggerated to the Sultaun, made

him suppose that the place was the one where hardship would be the greatest, and life the most difficult to bear. But he knew not of that glorious climate, of its cool, fresh, elastic, invigorating breezes; of its exquisite scenery; of the thousands of wild flowers, and green hills and hanging woods; deep wooded glens, in which brawled clear and sparkling rivers, now chafing over a pebbly bed, now creeping still under some golden mossy bank, covered with wild thyme and violets, from among which peered the modest primrose, the graceful cyclamen and tall fern, which nodded over the sparkling water. He knew not what ecstasy it was to Herbert to lie at length upon the soft sward, and to listen to the melody of the blackbird, which in the joy of its heart trilled its liquid song, and was answered joyously by its mate—or to see the lark, high in air, wheeling around in wide circles, till it was lost to sight, the same as he had used to listen to with Amy in the groves of Beechwood. Herbert's thoughts were often carried back to the past, remembering with the minutest exactitude every tone, every word of their sweet converse.

It was an unreal life, with none of the world's occurrences before him; from his high prison he looked forth over a wide country, but he could only speculate idly upon what was passing in the world. He had no hope of deliverance,—for ever since the first siege of the city, of which he heard after the English had departed, he had ceased to think of liberty except in death. He had no hope that his life, his intellect, which he felt to be strong and vigorous, would ever be called into the action they were fitted for;—nor his kind heart, his affectionate sympathies find again objects on which to fix. He had no companion but nature, upon whose varying face he could always look with delight, while he listened to the brawling streams, the murmurs of the waving woods—those sweet voices with which she peoples her solitudes.

Yet latterly he had found a companion. One of the guards brought a dog; Herbert attached it to himself, and the man gave it him when he went away. He could speak to it—he could speak English to it; and as they would sit upon a sunny bank together, he listening

idly to the murmuring plash of waters, the hum of bees, watching the bright flies, as they sported in the sunbeams, or the butterflies flying from flower to flower—drinking in the loveliness of the prospects, whether over the vast blue plains and endless ranges of mountains, or inwards, among the quiet peaceful valleys and swelling hills—he would, after musing awhile, speak to his favourite of her he loved, of his home, of his mother; and often, when tears started to his eyes, and his voice faltered, the dog would look at him wistfully, and whine gently as he scratched him with his paw; he seemed to know there was something wrong, and he thus expressed his sympathy; and when Herbert arose to go, he would run in wide circles upon the mountain-side, chasing the larks from their nests, tearing the grass with his teeth, and barking so joyfully that Herbert's spirit would be gladdened too.

But who can tell his yearnings for home—for the sight of a face beside those of his guards—for one word from a countryman? If ever he should escape, what tidings might be in

store for him—of the changes, the events of years? Escape! alas that was impossible. Everywhere the same rugged sides presented themselves, everywhere the same vast forests below, to enter which was death, and beyond them the territory of the Sultaun. He often longed to make a second attempt to be free, but his better thoughts proved its utter impracticability.

One day a few showers had fallen, and the air was soft and balmy; the dry winds of May had already abated, and the summer was beginning to burst forth. Herbert was lying upon the spot which we have once mentioned in Hulleekul Droog; his little garden was freshened by the late rain, and the odour of the flowers came to him gratefully, as he looked over the wide prospect, now so familiar, yet, for all that, presenting in colour, in effect, perpetually new features.

The Naik of his guard came to him. "Arise!" he said, "I have news for thee."

"Speak!" said Herbert—"what news? is Jaffar coming again? is he arrived?"

"Not so," said the man, "thou art to travel."

Herbert's heart sank within him.

"To travel!" he said anxiously; "has the Sultaun sent for me?"

"No," said the man, "*he* has not—he is dead. The English have taken the city, and the Sultaun is no more."

"Merciful Providence!" cried Herbert aloud in his own tongue; "is this true, or is it a dream? *killed* didst thou say?"

"Ay, Sahib," said the man, dashing a tear from his eye; "he was a great man, and has died like a soldier! Wilt thou come? thy countrymen will look for thee now, and perhaps the act of taking thee to them will give me favour in their eyes. As to this post, it will be abandoned—no one will need it; and if we remain here, no one will remember us. What dost thou think?"

But he spoke to one who heeded not his words—they hardly fell upon his ear. Herbert had knelt down, and on the spot where his first vision of escape had come to him, where he now heard he was free, he poured forth thoughts that were too big for words—incoherently, perhaps,—what matter? they rose

out of a grateful, glowing heart, and ascended to the throne of Him who looked into it and saw the feelings there, while the words that expressed them passed away upon the sighing wind unheeded.

Herbert arose. "Art thou ready?" he said.

"Tomorrow morning, Sahib; ere the dawn breaks—there is a moon—we will set out. In four days, if we travel fast, we shall be at the city."

* * * * * *

"Have you seen the poor fellow who has been just brought into camp upon a cot, Dalton?" said an officer of the staff, who lounged into Philip's tent, about noon, some days after the above. "It seems he was confined in a hill-fort, and the garrison have brought him in. Poor fellow! he is in a high fever; for they rested by the way in the jungles, and there he took it. But —— is looking after him; they have taken him into the hospital."

"Some native, I suppose," said Philip, looking up; he was writing to his wife.

"No—an Englishman; it was supposed there were none left, but—"

"Good heavens!" cried Philip, seizing his cap, and rushing precipitately from the tent. "If it should be he!—merciful Providence!—*if*—"

He flew across the camp; the officer looked after him in wonder. "What can he mean?" he said aloud. He saw Philip run at full speed to the hospital-tent, and he followed him there more leisurely and looked in. Philip was kneeling beside the bed of the sufferer, whose hands were clasped in his; the tears were streaming down his cheeks, and he was striving to speak. The other's eyes were upraised, while his lips moved as if in prayer, and a look of silent thankfulness, of joy, of perfect peace and happiness was upon his handsome features, which he could hardly have conceived expressible by any emotions. He looked for a few minutes, and then hurried away to hide his own. "It must be Captain Compton," he said, "so long missing; I will not disturb them."

It was indeed. In that silent grasp of the hand,—in the long, earnest, loving embrace which had preceded it,—in the recognition at once of the friend, and even brother, of his

early years, Herbert had already forgotten all his sufferings. He had caught a branch upon the shore he had so long floated past, and leaped upon it; and now secure, could even in that moment follow the frail raft which had so long borne his sad fortunes, and gradually lose sight of it in the visions which opened before him.

Not long did he remain on that humble pallet; removed to Philip's tent, and in his company and that of Charles Hayward, he felt, as they told him of the events of the past, that it was like one of those blissful fancies which had cheated him so often. He fell asleep, and dreamed of joy and peace, vaguely and indefinitely, and awoke refreshed by rest, and the prescriptions of the surgeon who attended him: he gazed around, and his eyes met the happy faces and joyful looks of his friends, — then, then only, did he feel it all to be true.

CONCLUSION.

Day by day Herbert made progress towards recovery, and with peace of mind returned strength and vigour. He had been ill for nearly a fortnight before the time we speak of, and had been tended with that constant and unremitting solicitude by his dear friends and brothers, which can easily be imagined, but not easily described. There was another too, the brave Kasim Ali, who had been quickly summoned to Philip's tent after the arrival of the lost one, and who had rejoiced in his recovery with joy as genuine as the others.

"How often I told you to hope, Sahib," he would exclaim, as he looked on the joy of the friends, and their love for each other. "How often I said he was not dead; that the Sul-

taun (may his sepulchre be honoured!) would not destroy him."

And then they would shake their heads, and think that if the Sultaun had been alive, how little would have been the chance of their ever meeting again upon earth.

"You appear to cling to his memory with fondness," said Dalton, in reply to a burst of praise which Kasim had uttered; "yet he used you ill, and would have killed you."

"I do," he replied; "he was a great man—such an one as Hind will never see again. He had great ambition, wonderful ability, perseverance, and the art of leading men's hearts more than they were aware of, or cared to acknowledge; he had patient application, and nothing was done without his sanction, even to the meanest affairs, and the business of his dominions was vast. You will allow he was brave, and died like a soldier. He was kind and considerate to his servants, and a steady friend to those he loved. Mashalla! he was a great man."

"Yet he was treacherous to you, Meer Sahib," said Philip.

"Ay, and had he not been so, ye might now have been far from hence. Ye see, sirs, the power of destiny, which, working even by such mean instruments as myself and Jaffar, has wrought great ends."

"What treachery?" said Herbert. "I have wondered to see thee here in the English camp, but thought thou mightest have been admitted to protection like the rest of the Sultaun's officers."

"It is a long tale," said Kasim, "but your brother, the colonel, knows much of it already, and he will tell it to you."

"Not so," said Philip, "tell it yourself, I should only blunder in the narration;" and he added, "since we have been together, I have never asked after the lady you loved, Meer Sahib; it is a painful question, perhaps, and may awaken thoughts and feelings long since dead. You smile—I rejoice to see it."

"You know, Sahib, we Moslems are not given to speaking of our wives or families," said Kasim, "and therefore I have never mentioned her; but she lives, I rejoice to say, and is as beautiful to my eyes as ever."

"Come!" said Herbert, "if it be a tale of love let me hear it; I have talked long enough, and can listen patiently."

Kasim then related his adventures, from the time he had appeared a youth in Tippoo's Durbar, to that in which, wearied by his cruelties and uneven temper, he had left him, and had so narrowly escaped assassination.

"I reached my village," he continued, "and long remained in secrecy, enjoying the quiet of my own home. I read my favourite poets, wrote verses, and a history of my own adventures, to pass the time; but in truth, after so much excitement, I at length grew tired of the dull life, and looked around me for employment. The administration of the affairs and collection of the revenue of my district happened then to be vacated by the person who had held the offices, and, as I understood the duties perfectly, I solicited and obtained the situation by help of a douceur to the minister: in its duties, and in the suppression of the disorders of the country, I found ample employment. Still I had never visited the city of Hyderabad, and as I had need to go there to ar-

range some matters with the minister regarding the revenue collections, I determined upon a short visit, and was courteously received both by him and by the Prince, who spoke much to me of the Sultaun's character, and the wild schemes of conquest which he meditated.

"I was delighted with the city, and the polite and courtly character of its nobles, and I remained longer than I had intended. One day I was riding towards the minister's house, in order to take my leave of him, previously to my departure, when a woman, rather old but decently dressed as a servant, whose features at first sight appeared familiar to me, ran towards me in the open street, and catching hold of the rein of my horse uttered a loud cry of joy. The horse was a spirited one, and began to curvet and bound, and she dared not approach me. I saw her speak to my groom; and when she had learned where I lived, she told him she would come in the evening, waved her hand to me, and darted down a narrow street. All that day I wondered much who she could be; I could not by any effort recall her name to my memory, and though I had an engagement with a friend, I waited at home till late.

"About dark a woman came, closely veiled, leading another. Both, as they entered, threw themselves at my feet, and kissed them repeatedly, uttering expressions of joy; they could not speak intelligibly for some time, nor would they unveil, though I could hear from their voices that they were aged. At length one playfully pulled the veil from the other's head, and to my joy and surprise I beheld Meeran. I recognized her instantly, and, raising her up, embraced her cordially. Sahib, the other was Sozun.

"I was, as you may suppose, breathless to know Ameena's fate. Was she alive? or did that hated place I remembered hold her mortal remains? 'Speak, I conjure you,' I cried, 'for I burn with impatience.'

"'She lives, Meer Sahib,' said Meeran; 'she lives, blessed be Alla and Moula Ali, and the Apostle and the Lady Muriam! to whom we have offered up Fateehas for her recovery on every anniversary of that event. Ah Meer Sahib, it is before me now!'

"'Alive!' I cried; 'but perhaps she is another's; some nobleman hath heard of her

beauty, and hath sought her in second marriage?'

"'No, by your soul!' cried Sozun, 'she lives and thinks but of you. She is as beautiful as a houri; the years that have passed now seem but as hours; her skin is as fair, her eye as bright, her form as round and perfect as ever.'

"'And the wound?' I asked.

"'Ah! it was a horrible gash,' said Meeran, shuddering, 'and it was long before it healed; she will show you the place if— if—'

"'Come,' said I, 'come! I burn to see her. I am not married; I never should have married perhaps. Come! it is my destiny: Ya Alla kureem, how it hath been worked out!'

"They led the way joyfully: her mother had been advised of my presence in the city by Meeran in the morning, and, closely veiled, she sat in her private apartment, awaiting me. Her husband was absent on some military duty, so I had to arrange all with her.

"How my heart beat as I entered the house! To be once more under the same roof with her who had loved me so long and so truly—to be

there in the hope that ere many hours should elapse she would be mine—mine for ever! Sahib, I had fought and bled on a battle-field, yet I never felt so agitated as I did at that moment.

"A cry of joy from the old lady welcomed me. 'Blessed be Alla!' she said, as she embraced me like a son; 'blessed be his name, that thou art here! Oh that my lord were here, to welcome thee, and greet thee as a son!'

"'And Ameena,' I said, 'tell me, by your soul, how is she? Doth she still remember Kasim Ali? I am rich, I am high in rank; I have left the Sultaun's service, and am now in that of your own government. What delay need there be? Let me, I beseech you, speak to her, and send for the Moola to read the Nika.'

"'Fie!' said the old lady, 'that would be indecent haste.'

"'What, after years of absence, mother? nay, say not so, but tell her I am here.'

"'Wait,' she said; 'I will return immediately.'

"I arose and walked about, burning with

love, with hope, with joy. The passion which for years had been smothered within me broke out as freshly, as strongly as when I had first seen her. The memory of that kiss was as if it still lingered on my lips. I heard a movement, a sort of hesitation at the door; I thought the old lady would come in. A figure entered, veiled from head to foot; it was a useless precaution—my heart told me that it was Ameena. I rushed towards her, caught her tottering form in my arms, removed the veil from her lovely features, and in a moment more strained her to my heart in an embrace which she did not resist; and in a kiss which united our souls once more, I pledged to her my faith and love for ever.

"Yes, she was as fair as ever; even more beautiful in the mature charms of womanhood, than had been the girl I bore from the dreadful waters, or preserved from the maddened elephant. There was more fulness in her form, more fire in the large and soft eye, which, filled with tears, rested on me. She clung to me as though I should never part from her again, and her hand trembled in mine.

"I understood her. 'I will not go from

thee, fairest! most beloved!' I cried—'more even than the bulbul to the rose! more than Mejnoon to Leila will I be to thee!'

"Her mother entered soon after; she saw Ameena unveiled and in my arms. She gently chid her, but she did so no longer when the fair and gentle creature bent on her an imploring look, and nestled closer to my bosom.

"The next evening the Moola came: all had been prepared in the meanwhile, and such a marriage as mine wanted no long ceremony—it was that only of the Koran. Some friends were sent for: in their presence I wrote a settlement upon Ameena, and received an assignment of all her property; it was little needed, for henceforth our lot was to be together for good or for evil. There was a screen put up in the apartment; the ladies came behind it; I heard the rustle of their garments and the tinkling of their anklets—it was like delicious music. The few prayers were quickly read, the witnesses signed and sealed the papers, and they left me. I heard the old lady bless her daughter, and the servants join in a fervent Ameen! In a few moments the screen was withdrawn, and I

was alone with Ameena. Sirs, the true believer when he enters Paradise, and is welcomed by the beauteous houris that await his coming, is not more blest than I was then. Hours flew, and still we talked over the past, and the miseries and sufferings of that dreadful time.

"'Tell me,' I said, 'how you escaped, and show me the place—the wound.'

"She bared her beauteous neck, modestly and shrinkingly. I looked on the wound and kissed it; it was on her shoulder, and had reached the back of her neck. A heavy gold necklace and chain, she said, had saved her life; but for that, she must have been killed.

"'But,' she continued, 'I knew nothing until I found myself in a small hut; Sozun was there, and Meeran. I shrank from Sozun, for I knew her to have been an evil woman; but she was vehement in her protestations of affection, and I believed her. I knew not till long after how nearly she had been connected with my fate; but she has been faithful, and that is long since forgiven and forgotten in her constancy. The house belonged to her daughter, and her husband was a foot-soldier in the

rmy; they were kind and good to me, and the faithful Zoolfoo bound up my wound; indeed he sewed it up, which gave me great pain; but I was soon strong again, and I inquired for the Khan and for you; they said you had both fallen, and I mourned you as dead. Afterwards when the Sultaun capitulated and there was peace, I followed my protector as a humble woman, and attended by Meeran and Sozun, under pretence of making offerings at a shrine, we escaped from the Fort, and entered that of the troops of the Dekhan: although my father had not accompanied them, yet I found his intimate friend Sikundur Beg, with whose daughters I had been a playmate. He was a father to me, gave me his palankeen to travel hither, and in my own home I speedily recovered.'

"I should weary you, sirs," continued Kasim after a pause, "were I to tell you of her daily increasing love, and the joy I felt in her society. I wrote word to my mother that I had met her and was married; and the old lady, transported with joy, actually travelled up to the city to greet her daughter. I was fortunate

in meeting with a good deputy in the person of my excellent uncle, and I remained at the city with Ameena's family. Her father arrived in due time from his post, and there never was a happier circle united on this earth than ours. I became known in the city: there was talk of a war with the Sultaun, and I was offered the command of a risala of horse, and received a title from the Government; they are common, but I was honoured. 'Distinguish thyself,' said the minister, 'thou shalt have a Jaghire* for life.' Sirs, ye know the rest. He has given me two villages near my own, the revenue of which, with my patrimony, and the command of five hundred horse, most of which are my own, makes me easy for life. My mother (she has old-fashioned notions) sometimes hints that the marriage was not regular, that I should even now ask the young daughter of a nobleman of high rank, and go through all the forms with her; but I am content, sirs, with one wife, and I wish to Alla that all my countrymen were so too; for I am well assured that to one alone can a man give all his love, and that where

* Estate.

more than one is, there ensue those jealousies, envies, wild passions, evil and sin, which were well nigh fatal to my Ameena."

"Thou art a noble fellow!" exclaimed both; and Charles Hayward too—for he also had been a listener—added his praise; "and believe me," added Dalton, "thou wilt often be remembered, and thy wife too, when we are far away in our own land. If it be not beyond the bounds of politeness, carry her our affections and warmest wishes for years of happiness with thee. I would that my wife could have known her! she must have loved one so sorely tried, yet so pure in heart. Thou wilt see her at Bangalore, Meer Sahib, and will tell thy wife of her."

The tears started to Kasim Ali's eyes: he brushed them away hastily. "I am a fool," said he; "but if any one, when I served him who ruled yonder, had told me that I should have loved Englishmen, I would have quarrelled with him even to bloodshed; and now I should be unhappy indeed if I carried not away your esteem. I thank you for your interest in Ameena. I will tell her much of you and your fortunes; and when you are in your own green

and beautiful land, and you wander beneath cool shady groves and beside murmuring rivers, or when you are in the peaceful society of your own homes, something will whisper in your hearts that Kasim Ali and Ameena speak of you with love. I pray you then remember us kindly, and now bid me depart today," he said, —but his voice trembled. "I have spoken long, and the Captain is weary."

Dalton's regiment moved soon after, and Kasim and his risala accompanied it; they marched by easy stages, and soon the invalid was able once more to mount a horse, and to enjoy a gallop with the dashing Risaldar, whose horsemanship was beyond all praise. At Bangalore they halted some time, it was to be a station for the Mysore field-force, and Dalton's regiment was to belong to it. His wife had arrived from Madras, and the deeply attached brother and sister were once more united after so long and painful an absence. Kasim saw her there; and though he thought it profanation to gaze on one so fair, yet he often paid his respectful homage to her while he staid, and told the wondering Ameena, and in after days

his children, of the fair skin, golden hair, and deep blue eyes of the English lady; and as he would dwell in rapture upon the theme, they thought that the angels of Paradise could not be fairer.

When Kasim Ali could stay no longer, he came to take his leave. "I shall pass the old Fakeer," he said; "have you any message for him? the old man still lives, and prays for you."

"We will go to him," said Philip; "'tis but a day's ride." Herbert agreed readily, and they set out that day.

The old man's joy at seeing them cannot be told: the certainty that his poor efforts were estimated with gratitude, were to him more than gold or precious stones; but his declining years were made happy by an annuity, which was regularly paid, and he wanted no more the casual charity of passing travellers.

And there, beneath those beauteous trees, which even now remain, and which no one can pass without admiration, the friends parted, with sincere regret, and a regard which never diminished, though they never met again. The

martial and picturesque companions of the Risaldar awaited him: Philip and Herbert watched him as he bounded into his saddle, and soon the gay and glittering group was lost behind the trees at a little distance.

About three weeks after the Fort had fallen, two men, one driving a heavily-laden pony, passed out of the gate of the Fort, and took their way towards the river; the rain had fallen much during that and the previous day, but there was as yet no more water than usual in the river.

"Come on, Madar!" said one whom our readers will easily recognise; "that beast goes as slow as if he had an elephant's load; come on! we are lucky to get across, for there is no water in the river."

"I tell thee the brute will never travel, Jaffar; the load is too heavy. Why wouldst thou not buy the other?"

"I could not afford it," he said, "one is enough: come on!"

The pony was laden with gold and silver bars and heavy stuffs, cloth of gold and silver, the plunder of years, and more especially of that

night when the Sultaun was killed, for Jaffar knew the places where the silver and gold utensils were kept, and he had laden himself with the spoil.

"He! he! he!" said he chuckling, "we will go to Madras and live with the kafir Feringhees; no one will know us there, and we can trade with this money."

"Good!" said Madar, "it is a wise thought, may your prosperity increase!"

They were now on the edge of the river. Opposite the Fort it is broad, and the bed, one sheet of rock, has been worn into thousands of deep holes and gulleys by the impetuous stream. It was no easy matter to get the over-laden beast across these, and he often stumbled and fell against the sharp rocks.

"The curses of the Shitan light on thee!" cried Jaffar to the animal, as it lay down at last, groaning heavily, and he screwed its tail desperately to urge it on. "Wilt thou not get up? Help me, Madar, to raise it."

They did so by their united strength, but ere it had gone a few paces it fell again. Jaffar was in despair. There was no resource but to un-

load it, and carry the burden piece by piece to the bank. They were doing this when a loud roaring was heard.

"What was that?" said Madar.

"Nothing, fool," said the other; "the wind, I dare say."

It was not—it was the roaring of the mighty river, as it poured down beyond the sharp turn above the Fort—a wall of water three feet high—foaming, boiling, roaring, dashing high into the air—a vast, brown, thick, muddy mass, overwhelming everything in its course. Madar fled at once to the bank.

Jaffar cursed aloud: the bundles had been tied up with scrupulous care, lest the money should fall out, and it was hard to lose all after years of toil. He tugged desperately at the knots—they would not come untied; he drew his sword and cut fiercely at them, bars of gold fell out; he seized as much as he could hold in his hands, and turned to fly. Some men were on the shore with Madar hallooing to him: he could not hear their words, but he thought they pointed to a rock higher than the rest: he got upon it, or in another instant the roaring flood

would have overwhelmed him. He was safe for a minute; the waters were rising gradually but fearfully fast; he clutched the rock, he screamed, he prayed wildly; the rush of the boiling waters appeared to increase; his brain grew dizzy; then he tried to scramble up higher—to stand upright. In attempting this his foot slipped; those on the bank saw him toss his arms wildly into the air, and the next instant he was gone! The fearful tide rolled on in its majesty, but there was no sign of a living thing upon its turbid waters.

Herbert did not long wait at Bangalore. Letters to England had now preceded him more than a month; they had gone in a ship of war, which was some guarantee for their safe arrival. There was danger on the seas, but he thought not of that. Home—Amy was before him, more vividly than it is possible for us to paint; the days seemed to pass as weeks, as the gallant fleet sailed along, for home bounded their prospect; ere five months had passed they anchored at the Nore. Philip Dalton and Charles were soon to follow.

It was on a bright warm day, early in Decem-

ber, that a travelling carriage with four horses was seen driving at desperate speed into the town of ——; it stopped at the inn.

"Horses on to my father's—to Alston," cried a gentleman within; "quick, quick!" The landlord looked at him for a moment: it was not Mr. Compton's son the clergyman; no, this was a darker, taller, handsomer person than him; he looked again and then exclaimed, "It cannot be—surely it cannot be Captain Compton?"

"Yes, I am he," was the reply; "but pray be quick!"

"Hurrah!" cried the jolly landlord, throwing up his cap into the air; "hurrah for the Captain! three cheers for Captain Compton, and God bless him! You shall have a barrel of ale, my lads, today for this joy. I little thought to have ever seen you alive again, sir."

"Thank you, thank you," said Herbert, "I will come soon and see you; now drive on, boys, at full speed;" and away they dashed.

An anxious party was assembled that day at the old Rectory: in trembling expectation of the sound of wheels, all felt nervous and agitated, and some laughed and cried by turns.

Poor Amy! it is difficult to describe her feelings of joy, of silent thankfulness. Her beauty was more radiant than ever; the purity of her complexion, with the exquisite expression of her eyes, was more striking, far more, than that of the lively and joyous girl of six years ago.

There was one who heard the sound of wheels long before the rest—it was Amy: the others watched her; her face, which had been flushed and deadly pale by turns, was lighted up on a sudden with a joy so intense that they almost feared for the consequences. On a sudden she appeared to listen more earnestly, then she arose, but no one followed her; she went to the door, passed into the hall, seemed to gaze vacantly around,—returned, sank into a chair, and pressing her hand to her heart, panted for breath. Soon after a carriage at full speed dashed past the house; a man opened the door—jumped out almost ere it had stopped—hurried with breathless haste into the hall—passed a crowd of servants who were sobbing with joy, and in another instant he was in the room. Amy sprang to meet him with outstretched arms, and uttering a low cry of joy

threw herself into his embrace, and was strained to his heart in silent rapture. Others hung round him, sobbing too, but their tears were those of joy and gratitude; the past was even then forgotten, for they beheld their long lost Herbert safe, and knew, as he pressed to his the faithful heart which had so long loved him, that their past sorrow would soon be turned into rejoicing.

THE END.

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